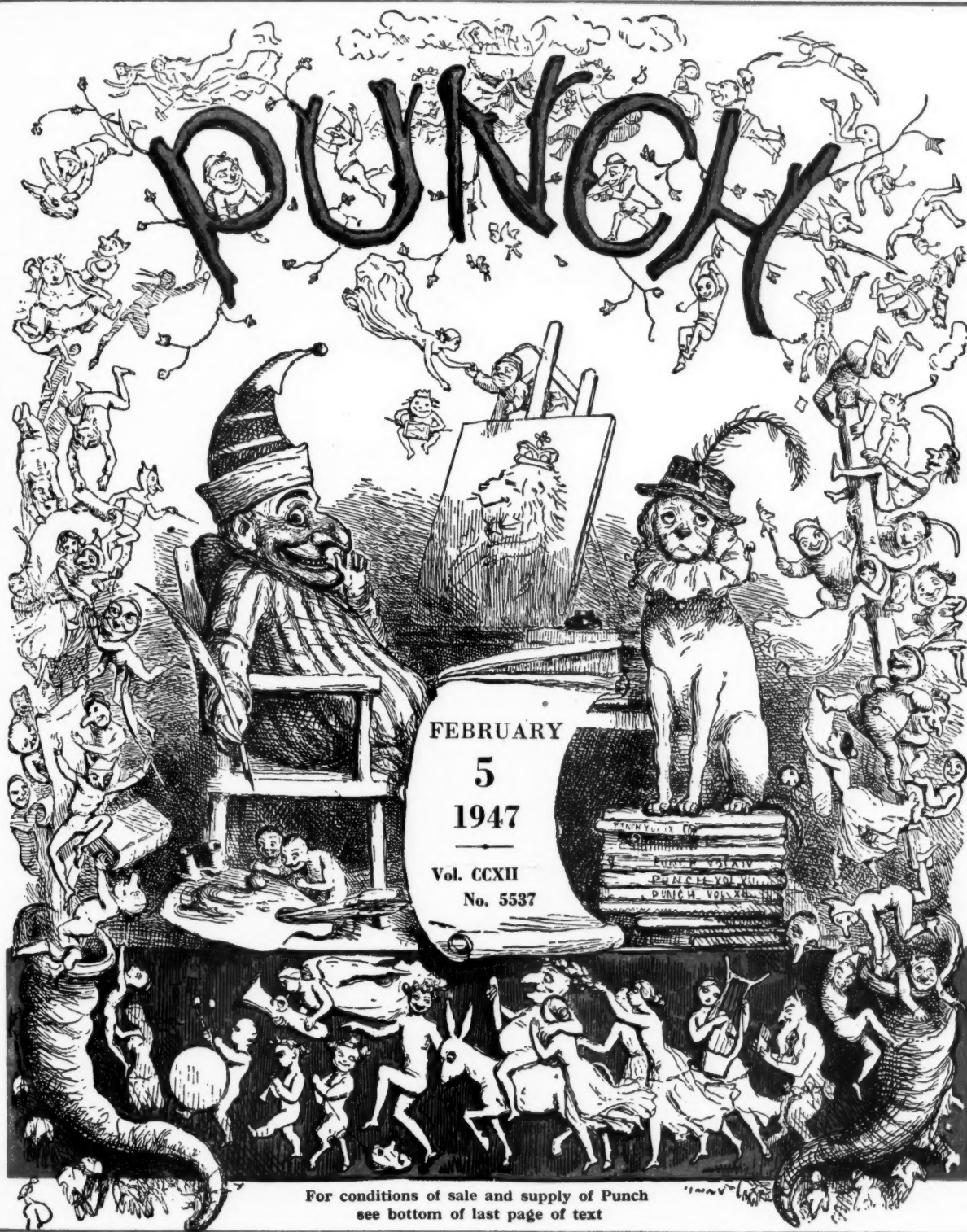


PERIODICAL

**DUNLOP** *Still* the standard by which all tyres are judged

FEB 25 1947  
DETROIT



For conditions of sale and supply of Punch  
see bottom of last page of text

Fit **Triplex**—and be safe  
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### SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

"Good-bye England."

"Funny how the hand of home is so reluctant to let one go."

"Bear up, Peter—two days out, and we shall be calling all these strange-looking people by their Christian names."

"And loneliness will depart again in the warm glow of new friendships."

"Ah!—the warm glow of new

friendships—an excellent idea. It's down the stairs, then sharp to starboard."

"Gerald, you have no appreciation of the anatomy of melancholy."

"I have, you know. In fact I've just had an exceedingly melancholy thought. Suppose there isn't any Rose's on this aquatic queen?"

**ROSE'S** — There is no substitute •



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Imperative to your body's welfare is an adequate supply of those essential vitamins, A and D. You can take these two in concentrated and convenient form in Crookes Halibut Oil. Nowadays, as much as during the war, this is a wise precaution against diet deficiencies.

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Liquid, per phial, enough for 16 days 2/-

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CHAMPION SPARKING PLUG CO., LTD., FELTHAM, MIDDLESEX



"Recently, in 'Punch,' you published the story of a Padre who was given some Tobacco, from a wreck in Tobruk Harbour, by a Sapper. Perhaps you would like the actual story from the Sapper who presented the Padre with this tobacco? The date was approximately February 15, 1943. A large supply ship which had been partly beached was subjected to a gale and the Tobacco started to come ashore in such quantities that at one period it was a quarter of a mile wide floating ashore. Probably I shall never see a sight like that again . . . this famous pack dancing on the waves amongst many other brands. Well, I selected yours to the extent of two kit-bags full. It was in perfect condition and to this day I am a confirmed smoker. . . . I have recently returned from the Middle East and have no objection to your using this letter."

(The original, from an R.E. Lieutenant now serving with the B.A.O.R. can be inspected at the Barney's Bureau, 24 Holborn, E.C.1.)

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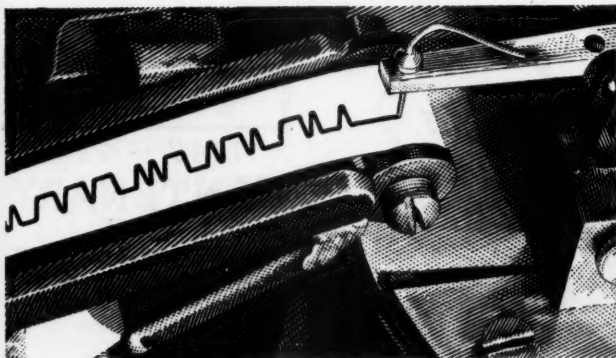


Deterioration in braking efficiency is gradual and insidious. Therefore it is a wise precaution to have your brakes tested at regular intervals by means of the FERODO Brake Testing Meter. Garages throughout the country displaying the now familiar "Lion & Wheel" Sign are equipped to render this service. It only takes a few minutes.

*Inaugurated by the manufacturers of*

## FERODO

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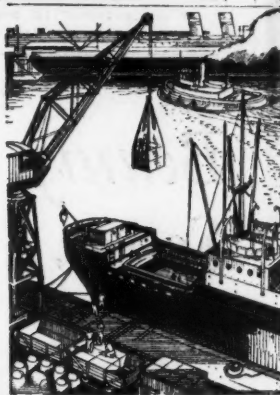
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BY AN EXPORTER

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Another reason why Old Henty says



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*—now that's a good tyre"*

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TOTAL HEALTH!

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Yestamin Vitamin Yeast is 40% protein (that is body-building). 3 Yestamin tablets taken at mealtimes



BREAKFAST



LUNCH



SUPPER

**9**

TABLETS OF

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3/- FOR 300 (1 month's supply)

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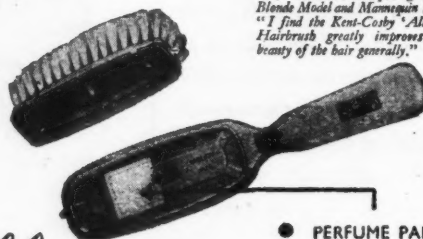


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Brushmakers

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PERFUME HAIRBRUSH

*Brushes beauty and fragrance  
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as trim*

*if it's  
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THE DOOR TO YOUR  
ENJOYMENT . . .

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Vibrant, Light, Medium, Dark, 6/9 a jar including tax.



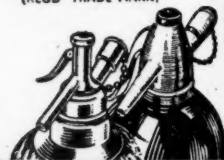
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Sparklets Syphons and Bulbs are  
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be able to make at home the purest,  
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up a drink.

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a very English institu-  
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stitution on mere talk.  
We are more than satis-  
fied with the consump-  
tion of *Balkan Sobranie*  
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to profound debate—  
'within the precincts,'  
and, when all the talk  
is over, government  
really depends on civil  
servants—always our  
staunchest devotees.



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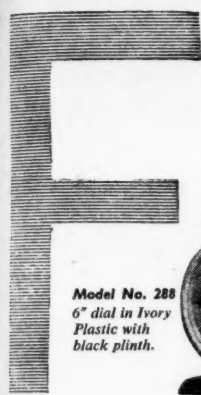
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Model No. 288  
6" dial in Ivory  
Plastic with  
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THE NEW RANGE includes plastic clocks (with the wide variation in finish which plastics allow), more traditional clocks in wood cases, and decorative clocks making imaginative use of such materials as metal and glass. Here you see just one of our many new models; and the new Ferranti Electric Alarm Clock will join the family very soon.

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**ECLIPSE**  
RAZOR BLADE  
MADE IN ENGLAND

Price 3' each  
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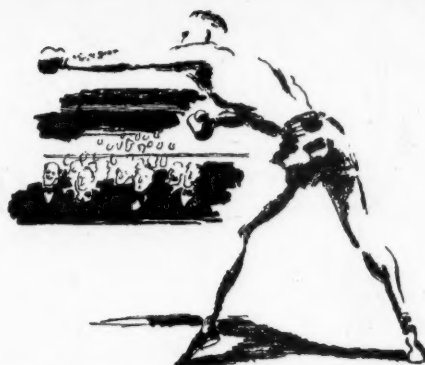
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Foot troubles ruin your poise and make you awkward and ungainly. Why should you endure such a handicap when so much can be done by proper attention at Scholl's? Weak feet can

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Scholl foot aids and appliances are obtainable at all  
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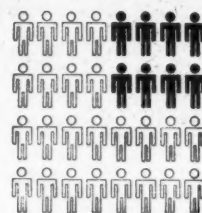
HOW MUCH OF  
HIS OUTPUT DO  
YOU WASTE?

Every uninsulated building wastes fuel simply because it is uninsulated. A sizeable, steel-framed factory may well need an additional 600 tons p.a. to make good heat lost through the roof alone. That is one miner's output for two years—all wasted, because heat losses are not inevitable. In every type of building they can be substantially reduced by lining the roof and walls with Celotex cane-fibre insulation. Celotex quickly pays for itself, in terms of reduced fuel bills and a smaller capital charge for the heating plant.

Invest in **CELOTEX** Insulation

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A recent medical test of an industrial group proved that Colds and 'Flu were the greatest individual time-losers, causing nearly one quarter of total absenteeism. Colds and 'Flu can be relieved safely and speedily by taking two tablets of 'Genasprin' in a little water—so can

**RHEUMATIC PAIN,  
NEURITIS,  
SLEEPLESSNESS,  
TOOTHACHE AND  
HEADACHE.**

Supplies are limited but your chemist will see you get your share. Prices 1/5d. and 2/3d.

At any time  
of strain or pain  
**'Genasprin'**  
sees you through!

The word 'Genasprin' is the registered trade mark of Genatolam Ltd., Loughborough, Leics. 10A

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SPECIAL  
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SEAGERS & CO.  
THE DISTILLERS  
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MAXIMUM RETAIL PRICE  
25/3 per bottle.





COOL, DELIGHTFUL, FRAGRANT

# ATKINSONS Eau de Cologne

THE EAU DE COLOGNE OF FINEST QUALITY

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J. & E. ATKINSON LTD.

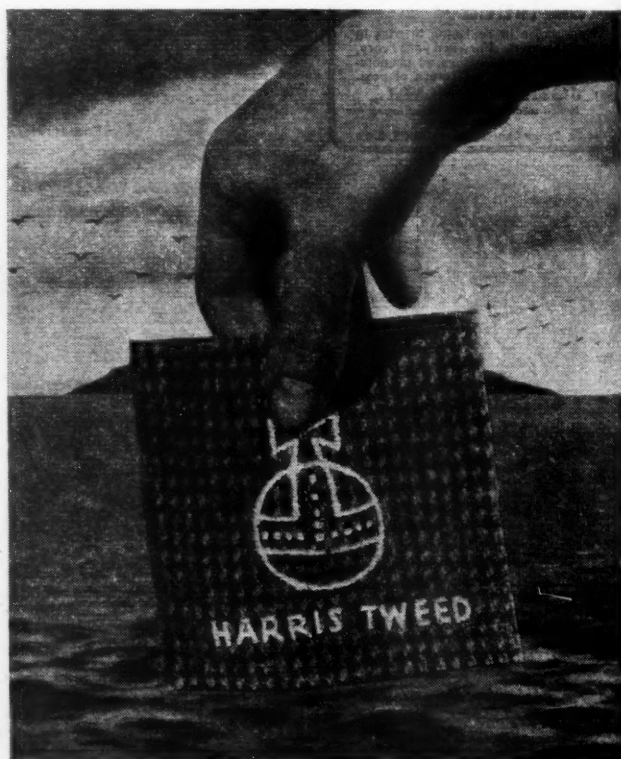
THE SPIRIT OF PERFECT FITTING



# KAYSER BONDOR

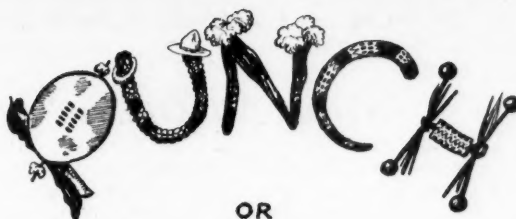
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TAILORED WITH *you* IN MIND



In the islands of the Outer Hebrides nature and craftsmanship combine to produce the inimitable Harris Tweed. You will know the product of the Hebridean crofters when you see the Trade Mark on the cloth or the label on the garment.

Issued by THE HARRIS TWEED ASSOCIATION LIMITED



OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXII No. 5537

February 5 1947

## Charivaria

The first Pole to work in a British coal-mine is named Skrzypczak. He was previously employed as the bottom line of an oculist's sight-testing chart.

We understand that many women have written to the Government to express their gratitude for being allowed to save twice the number of coupons now by not being able to buy nylons



"YWCA BURNS SUPPER"  
*Scottish evening paper.*

Too many cooks?

A burglar who broke into a country house left a black mask behind in the hall. The police are now said to be on the look-out for someone going about without one.

A political writer maintains that the House of Commons is faced by more bills than it can deal with. Taxpayers know the feeling.

"REPORTER, ex-war crimes, available take verbatim notes company mtgs."—*Advt. in Glasgow paper.*  
Busman's holiday?

"If you have method in your home," declares a weekly journal, "you should be able to put your hand on what you want in the dark." In the good old pre-cut days, of course, what you wanted was the switch.

The mystery of persistent thefts from a City warehouse has been cleared up by a checking-clerk who hid in the basement. Naturally enough the thieves never dreamt of a counter under the goods.

"CHINESE TRAIN IN ROYAL NAVY"

H.M.S. "Choo-Choo" ?

"Sunday Times."

It will be a long time before a rocket ship can travel to the moon, we read. So, it will have to be Bournemouth again this year.

A new American crime film opens with a double murder. Then there is a daringly original touch. The detective who arrives to view the bodies takes off his hat.



"Under nationalization the passengers will be the first consideration of the railways," says a writer. In the van, as usual.

"Your reference to the 'wool-winding' machine invented by Mr. Bowyer, of Childs Hill, calls to mind the fact that my mother bought one before the war at a local jumble sale for a penny. It has done, and is still doing, great service."—*Letter to "Evening News."*  
That's no way to speak of your father, Maud!

"Never relax in the cage," says a lion-tamer. A yawn, for instance, is fatal: some enterprising lion is sure to thrust his head in and steal all the applause.



## Above All Others

I HAVE been asked who, in my opinion, was the most wonderful man in the world. This is an age when one is likely at any moment to be bullied for one's personal view on such weighty matters either by telegram, telephone or house-to-house canvass. If I were not, as it were, upon oath, I should reply instantly "The man who invented the blow-lamp for unfreezing the waste-pipe of the bath." But I hold a higher view of my responsibilities even when my teeth are chattering. *I think that Blondin was the most wonderful man in the world.* Let me take you over from the studio to the warm and momentous summer of 1859. The scene is 22 m. N.N.W. of Buffalo. "He then made the return crossing," says a book which I have just been reading.\* "This time he took a chair with him, and balancing it on the rope by two of its legs, he sat in it, and on one leg stood on the seat."

I have made the experiment. I have made it fourteen times. I find that the transference of the weight of the body to the chair inevitably causes the other two legs of the chair to sink back to their original position which in this case was the floor of my study. Any attempt to correct the balance by leaning backwards at the moment of mounting invites an equally ludicrous failure.

I did not employ the tight-rope in my test, because I felt instinctively that it would only prove an extra embarrassment. But Blondin's tight-rope was stretched a hundred and sixty-two feet above the basin of Niagara Falls. I have little doubt that in my own case this would have added still further to the difficulty of the manoeuvre.

Turning to a bound volume of the *Strand Magazine* for 1897 I find what seems to be the reproduction of a broad-sheet showing M. Blondin cooking an omelette on "one of Walker's patent self-feeding stoves." I once cooked an omelette, though the fact has been subsequently denied, and was in fact disputed at the time, but the attempt was made in the kitchen, and in the presence of two assistants. In Blondin's case the stove is balanced on the tight-rope, and so is Blondin; he is entirely alone and North America may be observed faintly in the far distance below him.

It is not an electric stove, so that he is in no danger of being defeated by a sudden cut in the power, but otherwise the odds are entirely against success. He has no pole to balance him, and I do not see how he can ever have used a pole, though one authority asserts that he sometimes did. It can have been nothing but a nuisance to him. "Mid-way across Blondin lay on the rope at full length, and then turned a back somersault." A very few moments in the deep snow of the garden will prove to the amateur that it is far easier to do this without a pole in the hands than with it, and though my personal recollections of that epoch-making mid-Victorian June grow dimmer as the years pass by, I am inclined to discredit altogether the pole.

It is possible that M. Blondin employed it when he carried his manager, Mr. Harry Calcourt, across the Falls, quarrelled with him and threatened to drop him or leave him on the rope halfway over. The quarrel was apparently about the financial terms of their contract, and I think that Blondin—pole or no pole—made an error of judgment here. A fresh contract, hastily signed on a tight-rope a hundred and sixty-two feet above the United States and Canada, could easily have been held to lack legal validity in Europe or the rest of the world. But in the matter of carrying

passengers across the Niagara Falls, Blondin was always rather headstrong.

He offered to carry King Edward the Seventh, then Prince of Wales, over the rope, but for some reason or other, the Duke of Cambridge discouraged the idea. Possibly the Prince of Wales did not care for omelettes; or it may have been because Blondin was wearing stilts at the time, which was one of his ways of varying the monotony of the passage. Through the whole of his life King Edward VII was very particular about uniforms.

When Blondin appeared at (or over) the Crystal Palace in the April of 1862 he "played a march from *William Tell* on a fiddle, dancing and somersaulting the while," and I am assured that Charles Dickens, writing in *Household Words*, "castigated the enthusiastic multitudes on the score of morbid curiosity." No doubt they ought to have been reading good books by great authors quietly at home, but I am bound to confess that I know where my own morbid curiosity would have led me to be. And why morbid? The *Strand Magazine*, to which I have previously referred, seems to support Charles Dickens, for it describes the performances of M. Blondin under the general heading of "Foolhardy Feats." I cannot agree.

It would be rash for me, when I happened to be in the mood for turning somersaults and playing the march from *William Tell*, to have no floor beneath me but a tight-rope. It would interfere with my bowing. But I have not had the practice that M. Blondin had. I submit that the tight-rope was probably an aid to his virtuosity, that he would probably have been unable to gyrate during the finer passages without it.

When he retired to Northfields, where he died in 1890, it is most probable that he had a tight-rope at least a hundred feet high stretched across the garden of his villa, and that half-way along this he might have been seen on any fine afternoon, reading, meditating, cooking an occasional omelette, absentmindedly standing on his head to compose an oratorio, writing his impressions of America, or making himself a cup of tea. It would be a place of quietude for him, a refuge from intrusive visitors.

The *Encyclopædia Britannica* states that his real name was Jean Francis Gravelet. His father had been an officer in the armies of Napoleon. M. Blondin was undoubtedly the greatest man of the three.

EVOR.

## Embargoes

["FOR SALE, titled lady's beautiful full-length Skunk Coat; also Indian lamb; very reasonable."—*The Times*.]

QUINQUEREME of Printing-House from distant London  
Reaching a subscriber in sunny Palestine,  
With a cargo of Personal, Births, Deaths, Marriages,  
Bargains, Properties, at five bob a line.

Stately British colonel skipping through the topics,  
Commenting on Rugger and the Test Match scores,  
With a glance at Engagements, Regimental Dinners,  
And a snort at the letters of the old club bores.

Never-ending roster of the still-born crises—  
Army Training Areas, Coal, Viet-Nam—  
And the titled lady's beautiful full-length Skunk Coat,  
And the offer of a reasonable Indian lamb. B.E.F.

\* *The Early Doors*, by Harold Scott (Nicholson and Watson).





### THE MALIGNED MATRON

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe  
 She had dozens of children—adopted ones too;  
 She nursed them and taught them and said they might go;  
 But did they say "Thank you"? Not all of them—no.



*"The toughest district is round about Scotland Yard—we have to go about in pairs near there."*

### *Metamorphosis on Ice*

**W**E were not, as villages go, a particularly sociable lot. Efforts to bring us together, irrespective of class and clan, failed in my recollection almost without exception. The Debating Society died young; an ambitious proposal to stage the *Mikado* was wrecked in its early rehearsal days by some dispute over groceries; we had no lord of the manor in whose spacious grounds we might all have gathered, once a year at least, for some great Fête or Flower Show. We met at church on Sunday mornings, and there "our little community," in the rector's phrase, did achieve a certain fleeting cohesion; we were united at least in disapproval of Miss Fender's ostentatious singing.

But to see the village at its best you had to catch us on the ice. When the little lake beyond The Unicorn was frozen over you could rely on a turn-out that the rector at his most popular could never attain. We could all skate. In a sense we all lived for those few precious days on the ice, and I suppose because we were happy a new spirit of camaraderie and broadmindedness reared its

delicate head. It would be too much to say that all the barriers were down; they were not. Rather there was a shifting and regrouping; clans and coteries that lived in impregnable isolation for the remainder of the year opened their doors a fraction of an inch to newcomers; nods and even smiles were exchanged between parties wont to cut each other to the bone in more normal encounters at the lych gate or the butcher's.

A vision of Miss Pennyweight comes back to me across the years. An elderly eccentric, she was something of a social pariah, poor lady, chiefly, I think, because of the extraordinary assortment of garments in which she normally went abroad. It was not that she wore such a multitude of clothes simultaneously, but she seemed at some distant period of her career to have lost the knack of putting them on in the right order—sometimes with surprisingly embarrassing results. "She seems to take no proper pride in herself," we used to say, and it was whispered too, by the evil-minded, that she starved her cats. But on the ice Miss Pennyweight was transfigured.

I can see her now, sitting cross-legged by the lake-side like a collapsed scarecrow, gouging at the hole in the heel of her boot with a bradawl. She wore the old wooden skates, with a large screw at the back, which have to be rotated round and round until the screw bites firmly into the heel and are then secured in position with a complicated arrangement of straps. They were quite good skates, until the straps broke or the heel came off one's boot under the strain. People whose heels came off rarely admitted as much. They went home quietly "to see about tea."

With these engines in place Miss Pennyweight stepped on to the ice and floated away. There was no other word for it. She was far and away the best skater of us all, and the fact that one or more of her petticoats or dresses regularly trailed down on the ice lent added mystery and majesty to her progress. How she avoided disaster with these impediments we did not attempt to guess. It was enough to watch her, erect, superb, a slight flush on her withered cheeks, circling and sweeping among the figure-skaters.

The figure-skaters formed, inevitably, one of those temporary new alliances or coteries into which I have said our village was split on occasions like this. It is not possible, even for the most shrivelled human soul, to attempt—and achieve—a shaky figure of eight without a tentative deprecatory glance at the next man gathering his forces to strike out. He may sell paraffin or he may not; for the moment he is one of the elect. And not Mrs. Craigie herself, desperately tilting her starboard wing on the turn, can forbear a shamefaced grimace at her own inadequacy as Miss Pennyweight wheels by backwards, her hands primly enmeshed in an unbelievable purple muff. "Isn't she wonderful?" we find ourselves asking each other, and before very long our indirect tributes have crystallized into a forthright "I don't know *how* you do it?" from plucky Mrs. Elliston. By the third day Miss Pennyweight is the centre of quite a little group. "I don't care whether she starves her cats or not," whispers Mrs. Craigie with deplorable levity, "her control is quite amazing."

In the larger world beyond the figure-skating preserve, where we patrol ceaselessly round and round in couples, a somewhat looser but still noteworthy sense of harmony prevails. There is an unexpressed but well understood agreement that we prefer the speed and movement of free skating to the rather fiddling start-and-stop business of figure of eights. If others like to show off, that is none of our business. One would have thought, perhaps, that a man like Mr. Silkhurst, who was educated, after all, at quite a good school, would have known better, but of course there has always been something a little *odd* about—"Good afternoon, Mrs. Pomfrey. Yes, isn't it? Delightful!"

A nod for that old rapsallion, Barker. His Norfolk jacket becomes him well, and really, as he goes by with his head up and his hands behind his back, one cannot help thinking that he cuts a very much more gentlemanly figure, for all his drinking (or so they say), than that Rudolf creature from the rectory—

"Ah, Rector. I'm glad to see you out. Your boy seems to be enjoying himself." How one wishes one had the trick of reversing smoothly like that and continuing a conversation backwards as the rector can; but he should tell his oaf of a son not to thrash his arms about so wildly. We are not out for speed records here, one hopes.

"Hullo, Rogers! Had a fall? No damage, I hope."

Rogers! Great Scott! I suppose the last time one spoke to that fellow was in the great frost of 1896 . . .

H. F. E.

## Interview with Anon.

**T**O-DAY I brought off a first-class scoop,  
An interview with Anon.,  
The most prolific poet of us all,  
Whose work began  
Long before Homer's and will never be done.  
He was not old, but the majesty of the ages  
Sat on his brow as he read from well-thumbed pages.

I do not recall his appearance.  
Was he white or yellow or black?  
Dark or fair or ruddy?  
Of full or of hollow cheek?  
But I saw in his every dim and shadowy feature  
Poems of the past, the present, and the future.

To him all languages are one,  
Basic English and Esperanto,  
Greek, Chinese, Sanskrit, Slav,  
The slang-word and the portmanteau,  
All languages are live.  
He said "I remember the firelight in the cavern  
When I scrawled on rock my first attempt at a poem."

He was a seer and a lover, a singer of soldiers' songs  
And of nursery rhymes,  
Carols and lullabies, limericks, poster-slogans,  
Sagas and runes.  
He sang of the roc and the unicorn, phoenix and griffon,  
Of rockets and moon-groping radar and nuclear fission.

"Men call me robber and pirate,"  
He said, "and stealer of tongues.  
But to me the foundling, the orphan,  
By ancient right belongs."  
We said good-bye, and his eyes were starry,  
As he showed me out by a nameless doorway.

## FOR THE ROYAL ARMOURD CORPS

**A**N appeal has been launched, under the patronage of Mr. Winston Churchill, Field-Marshal Lord Montgomery and Lieut.-General Sir Bertie Fisher, for the Royal Armoured Corps War Memorial Benevolent Fund. The purpose of the Fund, with which the existing R.A.C. Assistance Fund has been amalgamated, is to foster benevolent work among all ranks, past, present and future, of the Corps, and in addition to provide for a visible memorial to enshrine the names of all the fallen.

Already serving members of the Corps have contributed nearly £20,000, and it is felt that a strong and permanent fund can be built up, if all those who wish to commemorate a relative or friend who died fighting with the Corps, or to give thanks for one who has safely returned, will take a share in the effort.

An annual subscription, sent on the donor's own special day of remembrance, is suggested as a form of donation that may appeal to many readers.

Cheques and postal orders should be crossed and made payable to the "R.A.C. War Memorial Benevolent Fund," and should be sent to The Secretary, R.A.C. War Memorial Benevolent Fund, Bovington Camp, Dorset.



## Journey into Plenty

"DUBLIN'S Fair City" is full of people who are beginning to be called "The Beef Steak Invaders." They are the hungry English, starving for a fresh juicy steak, noses twitching for whipped cream. You can tell them, apart from the slightly greyer tint of their complexion, by the fact that they are always talking about food. They retail their gastronomic experiences in the manner of food fans after a pre-war tour in France, swop fishing stories about the size of their steaks at lunch. "My dear," a friend said to me, "mine was literally *that* length, and *that* thick—about two people's ration for one week in England, I should guess."

It is an invigorating sight, seeing one's countrymen enjoying a square meal after such privation, and it goes to one's head to read down the menu and to see words one has only dreamt of during the past seven years: "... *Rognons sautés . . . sole bonne femme . . . œufs en cocotte à la crème . . . soufflé au chocolat . . .*" Unfortunately it goes to one's stomach too.

It happens at about the third day, and it is possibly aggravated by the fact that sherry is plentiful and cheap. You are sitting and sipping perhaps a very good Amontillado and perusing the menu with all the excitement of a child let loose in a toy-shop, when suddenly the blistering fear assails you: "Can I manage to eat all this? Can I indeed manage to eat at all?" If you are wise you will recognize defeat and for two or three days hold back on breakfast and tea altogether and go very lightly on lunch and dinner. But if you are human, and therefore not wise, you will think of all the dreary meals you have eaten during the past seven years and all the dreary meals you are going back to; you will take the camel's outlook and eat well, in preparation for the desert. And you will pass a very uncomfortable night, and will wake up feeling heavy and lethargic and rather depressed—because you have what is called in Ireland "Englishman's Stomach"—the penalty of letting yourself go at table.

It has to be admitted also that "letting yourself go" sets you back a good bit financially. Average *table d'hôte* meals of five courses ("Which of these can I have?" "All of them, madam." "WHAT!!") in the best hotels or restaurants cost you 7s. 6d. But then, for certain, you will espy

something on the *à la carte* list that you haven't eaten since 1938 and you just can't resist, so lunch or dinner will add up nearer to 12s. Lobster or salmon with real mayonnaise, not something that tastes like furniture polish, is about 6s. Smoked salmon 4s. A steak which reaches right across the plate 4s. 6d., strawberries and cream—yes, I said cream—the same price. It all tots up to about the same as at any of our West End restaurants by the time you have paid house charge and band charge and something for the little boy that lives down the lane. The only difference is that you've paid for real food instead of for fried sausage-meat called Wiener schnitzel and tinned diced veg. Drink, on the other hand, is dangerously cheap. A single whisky the size of an English double, 1s 2d. A full glass of sherry, 1s. 6d. Vintage port, 2s 6d. to 3s. And a good brandy that you can really see, instead of something that just looks like a badly washed glass, is in the region of 3s. 6d.

There comes the old, old problem of expenditure. Your stomach or your back. Food or clothes? Against the first is the fell disease which I have already described; against the second the rigid rule that nothing whatsoever must be taken out of the Irish Free State—which accounts for the dozens of people one meets in England now looking so pleased with themselves because they have been "too clever for the Customs." "Two pairs of silk stockings in my sponge-bag, my dear, and Robert poured half a bottle of whisky into my hot bottle and declared the other half." There are also sad tales to warn the rash, however, of people having their coats stripped off their backs by Customs officials and walking on to the boat or plane in stockinged feet because their new shoes had been confiscated. But, oh, those shoe-shops, how can one resist them? All the toe-less, heel-less shoes, the bright-coloured wedge-heeled sandals, the feminine shoes that despise the very word "austerity"—and without purchase tax! It's enough to make a female St. Antony fall. And as for coupons—well, I will tell you. If a little boy in the street calls "paper" and then murmurs something in your ear you will be wrong to guess it is "dirty postcards," because it will be something far, far better: "Want any coupons, Miss?"

It is exhilarating, the whole thing. The food, the well-stocked if expensive shops (only shoes are cheap), the assistants, all anxious to sell you goods, instead of looking at you like something the cat brought in, as at home. Even the fact that you can do a bit of wangling with loose coupons, after that insanely rigid rule here—a small tiresomeness in an already tiresome world—gives you a kick. It is, on the other hand, somewhat irritating to discover beautiful nylon belts marked "Made in England" and men's full-length socks bearing a Scottish label.

But above all there is an atmosphere of success, of prosperity—at least that's how it seems in contrast to poor frustrated England. I don't know how the Irish feel about you or how they regard the Beef Steak Invaders. But I fancy it is much as Europe regarded American tourists before the war. We buy up everything, fill the restaurants and theatres, pay high prices and spoil Eire's home market, luring away their maids with offers of high wages. "Then," somebody told me, "they get home-sick, and expect the same money when they get back."

(Facts or statistics can be inserted here.)

Prices of houses in town and country are soaring to keep pace with the demands of our own muzzled private enterprisers and over-taxed landed gentry. This comes hard on the Irish, who have no controls, no utility items, to help the poor—who are very poor indeed. There is already talk of a 12½ per cent. rise in wages to meet the increased cost of living. And the fact that many Irish secretly admired or openly shared our (well-censored) struggle in the war may add fuel to their resentment. Some perhaps suffer a twinge of unacknowledged conscience; many suffer a sharper twinge of lost jobs not to be restored.

Altogether there is no doubt that although invasion may be very pleasant for the invaders, you don't often catch the natives putting out flags. M. D.

### American Commentary

"Organised Labour still looks to the President to veto any extreme anti-Labour laws, but is aware that the President's political influence is now smaller than that of almost any other occupant of the White House in history, and that his sympathy with Labour is not so warm as that of President Roosevelt."—*Glasgow paper.*



"Hullo, Jones, how are you?"



"Well, as a matter of fact, I had flu rather badly a little time back, and then—"



when I was a bit better, I had the misfortune to fall downstairs and break my leg, and while I was laid up with that—

## Litotes

THIS may seem a strange name for our gardener, though it is distinctly more manageable than his own name of Thistlethwaite. We gave it to him because of his unbroken habit of using that under-statement which Nesfield used to assure us is intended for emphasis.

In moments of forgetful eulogy he has been known to call some of his own crops "goodish," "fairish" or "middlin'." One exhibition tray which eclipsed all others at the local show even earned the epithet of "useful"—but that was in a moment of unguarded elation: "not so bad" is his usual limit of praise.

Sent to carry a gift of plants to a distant farm he reported on his return, "I can't say but what they were good to me. I had two basin' o' broth, an' hauf a beef-an'-taatie pie. If I'd said owt I could have had my dinner!"

My wife gave him a ticket for the concert of the season in our little town. To her, not knowledgeable in North-country flattery, I had to interpret his thanks next day: "Aye, why, I've been at mony a warse do!"

Let there be drenching rain, he will say "It comes down a bit droppy-like." At ten degrees below zero he'll venture "I've known it warmer in summer," but when two years ago our countryside was snow-covered for six weeks on end Litotes said he "wouldn't be sorry to see awd England again."

His health—he has never missed a day from work for years—is of three states only, "middlin'," "nobb but middlin'" and "nobb but varry middlin'."

It is but fair to admit that in condemnation his severity can be tempered by this same habit of moderation. "What sort of joiners have they got in the next village?" I asked him. "Why,

now, sir," he said slowly, "they do tell me that their washin'-tubs run better than their wheel-barrows!"

Whether, at heart, Litotes is pessimist or optimist I cannot tell. The other day he killed his pig and I asked the customary question: "Well, what did the pig weigh?" "Why," he said, "it didn't weigh as much as I aimed it would—but then I knew it wouldn't!"

Hearing some term of endearment pass between me and my wife he said, "I used to be like that when I was first wed. I used to think a deal about my missus. I used to say she was t'nicest, sweetest little thing I'd iver seen. I thowt I could eat her!—An' now I oft wishes I had! I used to say she was as playful as a kitten—but you know what kittens grow up to be!"

That this is a libel on his bonny apple-cheeked wife no one knows better than he. But his testimonials are never fulsome. Asked for a reference for an under-gardener whom he had described to me as "framing middlin'," he gave it in the words, "Do you think I should have kept him two years if he'd been good-for-nowt?"—and with that the future employer was well satisfied.

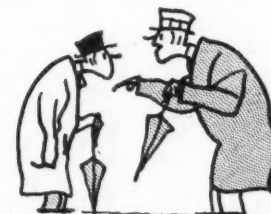
But it was my wife who received his warmest compliment, in which, I suppose, I shared, for Litotes was overheard to confide to the gardener next door: "Our master has done a vast deal dafter things than he did when he married yon missus of his!"

"A man with a gift for organization—he had transferred the Pioneer from Allahabad to Lucknow without missing a single editor—Brig. Young is at home in any task which requires immense energy."—Indian paper.

And how elusive those editors can be!



we got flooded out, and I had to be rescued in a punt, and that—



gave me pneumonia and all sorts of complications, and so, what with one thing and another, I'm only just—



getting about again."

## An Innocent at Large

XVIII—Jam Session in New York

IT was going to be a terrific party—no doubt about that. The terrificness was guaranteed by the vaguely late kick-off—"Anytime after midnight," said the invitation—and by the names of the other guests. Frank Sinatra would put in an appearance. So might "the Duke."

I went to bed at six o'clock, leaving instructions that I was to be roused at eleven-thirty. A jam session in New York usually runs to the extreme limit of human endurance. For the uninitiated I should explain that a jam session is an unplanned and unrehearsed performance of unknown pieces of noise by a team of jazzmen. It is not quite a free-for-all, for the musicians are hardly capable of straying far from a downbeat which has been transformed by a lifetime of persistent stomping into a common pulse: and, anyway, professional etiquette dictates that each performer in a jam shall have his solo say. There is always a semblance of order.

A jam session is made up of jams, each one lasting some ten to twenty minutes. At each break the musicians dive for refreshments and towels and listen to a gramophonic (or phonographic) play-back of the piece they have just perpetrated. Jazzmen work hard during the week at "commercial," dance music for the popular market, but they love nothing better than to spend their Sunday nights working even harder at "uncommercial" jams. Then they can really let their hair down, cut the rug, go to town, shoot the works, or something. And that is why I was able to hear Chick Almedo and his Boys without paying a single cent for the privilege. That is why I was going to hear "Frankie."

Chick (on drums) was well in the groove when I arrived. A greyish young man with long, yellow hair was bouncing at a piano, his shoulders hunched, his head low on his

impressionistic style. This masterpiece of alcoholic art was attributed to Mr. Ludwig Barmellon. A greyish young saxophonist sobbed in seemingly helpless bursts of anguish which took his rhythm dangerously near the extreme edges



"Tinnis, inybodeb?"



Holloman

Chick (on drums).

chest. The instrument itself deserves mention. Most of its ivories were missing and the highest octave had been ravaged by fire. It was decorated with nymphs and wild-eyed goblins painted in bright colours and a very free

of the groove, but he was back in there with masterly precision whenever it was necessary to vindicate his musicianship. A greyish young trombonist and a greyish double-bass player completed the outfit.

There were no seats for the spectators, who stood or stooped, glass in hand, beaming ecstatically, tapping their feet and giving rhythmically at the hips. Chick worked his boys to a glorious cacophonous climax and a madly drummed finale. Then, as the cheering died away, I was introduced to a circle of greyish faces and handed a drink.

"How's the drama getting along in London these days?" somebody asked.

I mentioned *Lear* and *Cymbeline*.

"But, say, don't you still have those dramas where there's a sort of country-house party going on and somebody in a striped, coloured jacket and white pants comes bounding in with a tennis-racket and says, 'Tinnis, inybodeb?'"

There was a lot of laughter at this, and for the rest of the party I was greeted with "I say, old boy," "Rather, old top," and "Oh, frightfully ripping, what!" I felt mean not to be wearing a monocle.

At 1.30 A.M. we sat on the floor to hear Chick's third jam. Somebody had telephoned to Frank Sinatra again. He was coming over right away.

A greyish young woman in sandals and shorts was sitting next to me. When I offered to replenish her glass she



introduced herself and began to talk enthusiastically about her latest husband. She soon had a far from respectable audience and, one thing leading to another, it was not long



"... about her latest husband."

before we were waist-deep in a discussion on divorce. And here I pause in my narrative to set down the facts as they unfolded.

I learned from a greyish publisher's reader that the divorce rate is lower in New York City than in the rural districts of the state and only about one-twentieth the rate in St. Louis. I have an idea that the figures for the City of London or Whitehall would prove equally deceptive. Stranger still was somebody's discovery that the divorce rate per thousand marriages varies proportionately with the elevation of the homestead above sea-level. The lower the fewer, as it were. Folks way up in the western mountain ranges change partners, it seems, with the speed of a barn dance, whereas marriages in the Atlantic states prove obstinately long-lived. My informant put it all down to ozone. Somebody else quoted figures to prove that the people most prone to divorce are actors, salesmen, musicians and barmen. We felt sorry for the barmen and called for another round to show our sympathy. Then we learned that farmers, civil engineers and firemen have the best records for marital fidelity. Farmers I can understand, and firemen too, perhaps—but why *civil engineers*?

Chick and his boys were now grouped about the gramophone. Double-bass, with his left ear well inside the loud-speaker, was trying to isolate his own *pizzicato* ponging from the ravelled skein of noise, and from his wide grin it was clear that he liked what he heard. Oddly enough (and several people remarked upon it) the recording sounded much better than the original or "live" version. It wasn't merely that the actual volume of sound was less oppressive, though that helped, but that whereas the gramophone made the confusion seem planned and inevitable, the contortions of the performing musicians, their frenzied blowings and bashings, made one expect far more trouble than actually emerged.

My host was a nice greyish little man dressed in a green silk shirt, yellow bow-tie and black slacks. He now interrupted our discussion with the announcement that "Frankie" was on his way over, and a greyish young

woman, just out of college, almost swooned at the news—only saving herself by clutching at my glass for support. By now most people, even the most hysterical enthusiasts, had had about enough of Chick, but Chick showed not the slightest sign of easing up.

"Why, Mr. Brunnenschatz!" I heard him shout at a greyish little barrel in a white lounge-suit. "Mr. Brunnenschatz, by all that's . . . the greatest living lyric-writer in the game! Pleastameetya, Mr. Brunnenschatz, sure am!"

They pumped hands.

"How's about using the outfit an' recording a noo number, Mr. Brunnenschatz?" he said.

"Sure, why not?" said Mr. Brunnenschatz.

So the greatest living lyric-writer slipped over to the piano, patted the greyish pianist on the back and took his place at the keys. He let his fat fingers race over the clichés while with head bent back he studied a corner of the ceiling. Every five seconds or so he blew ash from his cigarette without removing it from his mouth.

Now he was all set. He spoke a few thick words to Chick (on drums) and to the greyish trombonist. I gathered that the new jam would be in the key of D with no holds barred. Then Mr. Brunnenschatz tapped the loud pedal four times with his foot and shot away to a very brisk start.

When the door of the studio opened suddenly every eye turned. But it was only the bartender with another crate of bottles. Not "Frankie." The room was unbearably stuffy: there seems to be less oxygen to the cubic foot when you are thirty-seven floors up—especially when there are too many lungs working overtime. So my friend took me out on to a balcony, a ledge of concrete overlooking a man-made canyon. New York was still lit up. Just across the street a few lights shone from the black silhouette of a splendid hotel—the hotel in which the foreign ministers of the Great Powers were taking their rest after the day's work at Lake Success. The sudden switch from the mad junketing of the jam session to thoughts of atom bombs, peace treaties, sealing wax and kings was altogether more sobering than the painful impact of the cold night air.

We returned to the studio to find the musicians packing up and the guests stampeding for overcoats and furs. "Frankie" wouldn't be able to make it after all. We joined the *mêlée*.

As we stood in the roadway waving at taxis and dodging their brutal thrusts I found myself wishing I had been in bed as long as Mr. Bevin or Mr. Molotov. Or as long as Frank Sinatra for that matter. Hod.

o o

### To a Chair-Cover Going to the Cleaners

O GENTLE thing, we pray thee face  
Thy coming battle with a manly grace.  
Discard thy modesty, be brave,  
For thou must win or go down to the grave.  
Be bold, courageous, stretch thine arms,  
Forget the violet and her timid charms.  
Although thy punishment be drastic,  
Ponder awhile the spirited elastic.  
Though 'noxious forms thy fate assumes,  
Fight, we implore thee, fight against the fumes.  
These soft surrenders are but vain,  
Let no harsh hand subdue thee once again.  
Though acid be the cup you drink,  
Be valorous, dear friend, and do not shrink! V. G.



"Two Moby Dicks and veg."

### Further Comments

**M**Y readers will agree that I have struck something new in the way of titles; the word "Further" in connection with the word "Comments." Another novel feature is that all the comments in this article, as far as I can see from here, will deal with aspects of the shopping world, more or less. My first comment is on people who ring up shops, and reminds me of the curious fact that when a telephone rings behind one of the counters of a department store there is, to the customers noticing it, an extraordinary element of touch and go in its being answered. This makes it all the odder that when we ourselves ring up a big shop we nearly always get an answer, if only from another customer who wants a dust-bin and can't make us out. But what I wanted to remark on was that people who ring up shops would be the first to admit that helpless charm can be overdone, and that they didn't really expect to get away with asking for the sock department. Not that everyone is as blunt as that. Sociologists say that shop switchboard operators acquire a wonderful slant on that shy, semi-literary quality with which timid people try to define what they want to speak to in the words they think a shop would approve of.

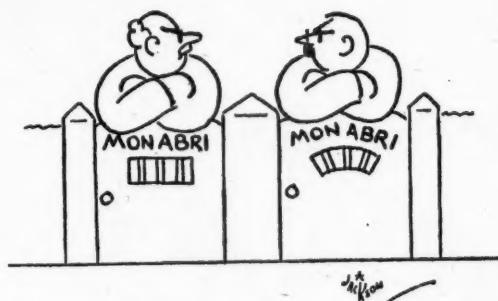
Ring up a laundry is not quite like ringing up a shop, though in both cases we have to get the number right and in neither case can we see the face of the person answering. (Readers may chip in here that you can't ever, except sometimes in flats opposite. That shows a firm sensible grip of life that I hope they will maintain.) The point about laundry-telephoning is that the people who do it are never quite normal. They have lost a sheet, or they have gone and shoved in something they want back early, by which I mean earlier than the rest, or they want the whole lot back earlier and hope that by skill in asking when it is due they may alter the course of destiny. Anyway they are out to protest or plead or wheedle; and

they are handicapped by knowing what the laundry thinks about them. Throwing off the anonymity of laundry-mark, name-tape, name and address and handwriting, they now stand revealed as the voice of the person whose green bath-towel is slowly unravelling from the middle outwards. It is small wonder that the laundry-telephoner hangs up no better off, unless you count as better off a clearer realization of the inevitability of the inevitable.

My next comment is on toothpaste buyers. They are worthy of comment because they start off so decisively—stepping up smartly and stating their brand of toothpaste loud enough for the chemist to hear and for the other people in the shop to check up whether it is the same as their own, and if so what a coincidence—and then when it comes to the size they collapse into as pliable a lot as even shop-assistants meet. Asked what size they want, they will answer oh, well; asked if they want the one-and-tenpence-halfpenny they will say oo, anything; told that it used to be the one-and-ninepenny they will nod knowingly, and off they will go with their tube in its little cardboard pull-over, stopping only to return for the razor-blades. Toothpaste buyers are the opposite of coat-button buyers, opinionated niggers who point to boxes on shelves and sometimes—such is the impossibility of pointing to one box more than another at that distance—edge round the counter and find themselves experiencing that guilty thrill which comes of knowing they are looking as if they run the shop and fearing they will be caught and eaten.

Statisticians have been doing a bit of research into what they call purchases and say that anyone who manages to buy a packet of what they call breakfast cereals carries home the biggest object for its weight known to statistics; and that such buyers are the opposite of lighter-flint buyers in that cereal-buyers can hardly get through the front door but have the satisfaction of leaving the packet on the kitchen table for all to see, whereas by the time lighter-flint buyers get home, however easily, they will have either lost the darned thing or forgotten buying it.

**B**ANKS are not exactly shops, but I shall bring them in because they have thrown their lot in with the shop world by opening and shutting at stated times (times so inviolable and difficult to be sure of in argument that they seem to have been fixed by Nature or Parliament), by having swing-doors for customers to bang each other about with, and by sporting shop-fronts of a kind. The bank-front is notably unlike a shop-front, for it aims simply at filling its bit of space. The result is a triumph of negativity, and even the banks realize this, for a lot of them hang out little signs at right angles to themselves to warn customers who have walked past them once not to miss them coming back. But the aspect of banks I really wanted to comment on is the loose box behind the counter. Here, glassed in so that customers may see them—or perhaps so that they may see the customers, only you wouldn't get customers thinking that way round—are people sitting at what the public cannot define as ledgers without feeling a credit to the influence of Dickens. These people sometimes get up from their ledgers and walk about, or even speak to each other, and if no one has ever seen them having a cup of tea it would be because banks shut before tea-time; a pity, for a cup of tea would fit in nicely with the way the public has built them up as people who are not real people but people who act real now and then to accentuate their unreality. These people, I need hardly say, reach their zenith when someone at the counter peeps round the glass to ask about our bank balance. The person actually approached becomes an oracle, by which I mean someone sitting cross-legged on a small mound and wearing a sort



DEADLOCK

of dark toga. (This reminds me that the public, on whom history-books make more impression than educationists may think, clings to the idea that a senator ought to wear a sheet with a lot of gathers, and so finds the American system of government difficult to visualize, but this, though rather pleasant, is beside the point.) When finally the oracle hands out half a piece of paper it is typical of the public, or of the size of its bank balance, that it loses all interest in things like dark togas, though if its bank balance seems too big it does feel that those nice people behind that nice glass did it.

The only two other aspects of the shopping world that I have space for are greengrocery deliveries and small change. No one has ever taken in a box of greengrocery without being impressed by the surface area and sheer leafage of more than one cabbage, except of course the people who did not order cabbages; and no one has ever offered a shopkeeper two and sevenpence-halfpenny for something costing fourpence-halfpenny without feeling so helpful as to be a nuisance.

## To Buyers of Swoof

**I**F a man calls on you selling Swoof I shall be glad to know how he is getting on and whether he bought any. I went to a lot of trouble with him. At my street door he opened a very small attaché case, shuddered, and averted his eyes.

"You don't want none o' this, I know," he mumbled.

A shocking opening for a salesman of course. I peered into the case and extracted a small bottle.

"What is it?"

"Swoof," he said, wincing.

"Well, go on," I smiled encouragingly. "What have you to say about Swoof?"

He rattled his case despondently and turned away.

"If you don't speak up no one will buy the stuff," I said.

"I don't blame 'em, either," he replied morosely.

We could not go on like this. With all these shortages salesmanship is bound to decline, but there are limits. I rallied him with a playful shake of his arm.

"First of all," I said, when he had picked up all the bottles, "tell me what Swoof is—"

"Swoof," he interjected sourly.

"Very well, then, Swoof. Now what does it do?"

"It gives me a severe 'eadache," he moaned.

Impatiently I scanned the leaflet round the bottle.

"Here we are!" I exclaimed delightedly. "Among other things, Swoof is an infallible cure for headache. Take one teaspoonful—"

"What, me?" he cried, recoiling. "I wouldn't drink that stuff for anything. *It's gone off!*"

"Gone off?"

"Yes. It's this 'ere coal shortage."

"You don't mean to say they put coal in this?"

"I wouldn't be surprised," he sniffed; "but I mean when they make it. Every time they bring it to the boil there's a power cut, and it goes flat. You ought to see it—it'd break your bloomin' heart!"

"But a good salesman overcomes such difficulties," I said.

"What you need is more pep, zest, sparkle—"

"How can I sparkle with this 'orrible stuff?"

"That's just the point," I went on warmly. "You must work up a passionate enthusiasm for Swoof. Read the leaflet—Swoof is amazing stuff! It polishes furniture, scours saucepans, and mixed with a gallon of water makes a cool refreshing drink. And only sixpence a bottle. What a bargain!"

"It ain't worth it," he said, but I read on ardently.

"It's a hair tonic, it removes spots, and will burn as a night-light for thirty-three hours. Why, you have a splendid line here! Everyone in the home can find a use for it—no roof without Swoof, in fact. How many bottles have you?"

"Ten."

"In these days," I cried, glowing with enthusiasm, "buy while you can. I'll take the lot. Amazing stuff! The marvel of the age!"

I hurried indoors and lined up my ten bottles in the medicine-chest. Then my ardour began to cool. I had been perhaps a little impetuous—carried away by my own eloquence. It just shows what really good pre-war sales talk will do.

The man with the attaché case came back ten minutes later. He looked more confident, more cheerful. I had no intention of buying any more Swoof. I regarded him coldly.

"I been thinking over what you said just now," he said gratefully.

"Indeed?"

"Yes," he said, handing me sixpence. "I'll have a bottle."







*"You'll get a pretty hot memorandum from the Ministry about this, mate!"*

### *To a Lady at the Alexandra Palace*

CLOSE on half-past eight at night,  
 Standing in a pool of light;  
 Looking cool but feeling hot  
 From the focused kilowatt;  
 Patiently you wait your cue,  
 Patiently I wait for you.

Through a lens your image flies,  
 Mouth and nose and ears and eyes  
 Into little pieces break  
 On a sensitive mosaic;  
 Finer than the finest sand  
 Electronically scanned.

Lady, do you realize  
 Now you have no ears or eyes  
 And in little separate bits  
 Now your pulsing signal flits  
 Lightly as a fairy fable  
 Down a multi-channel cable?

In this novel guise you race  
 To Control Room—here your face

Blokes synthetically mend  
 For the demon tilt and bend;  
 Seizing opportunity,  
 Places light where shade should be.

Gaining power on you go  
 Soon becoming radio,  
 Jolly little ultra-short  
 Waves of you surge and cayort,  
 Travelling with the speed of light  
 Over roof-tops through the night.

Conjured out of space at last  
 By the di-pole on my mast;  
 Down concentric feed-in wire  
 To a corner by my fire,  
 Through the vision superhet  
 Of my television set.

Now each movement clearly seen  
 On the surface of the screen;  
 Nimble gestures dusk and play  
 With the fleeing cathode ray;  
 Smiling at your eager host . . .  
 Ætheric and graceful ghost.



### WINTER REVELS

THE MINISTER OF FOOD ROASTS A POTATO WHOLE ON THE THAMES.

## Impressions of Parliament

### Business Done:

**Monday, January 27th.**—House of Commons: Farewell to Their Majesties.

**Tuesday, January 28th.**—House of Lords: The Godspeed is Echoed.  
House of Commons: Back to the Land.

**Wednesday, January 29th.**—House of Commons: Land from Another Angle.

**Thursday, January 30th.**—House of Commons: Still More Land.

**Monday, January 27th.**—Mr. ATTLEE, who, in his quiet way, so often puts into a few words what everyone is feeling, moved in the House of Commons today a loyal Address wishing the KING and QUEEN and the two Princesses godspeed and a safe return from the tour of South Africa which they begin at the end of this week. He said that the people of Britain would feel their *absence*—but that it was good that other peoples of the British Commonwealth of Nations should have the felicity of their *presence*.

And that, the House felt, was precisely how the nation viewed the tour. When Mr. CHURCHILL—"on behalf of His Majesty's Opposition," as he put it—seconded the motion for an Address, the picture was complete. Mr. CLEMENT DAVIES, for the Liberals, added his commendation, and then Mr. HERBERT BUTCHER, for the Liberal Nationals, rounded off the little one-sided debate.

But just as Mr. Speaker rose to put the motion to the vote, Mr. WILLIE GALLACHER, leader of the Communist Party of two, jumped up. He wanted to record his dissent from the motion, he said, because the South African Government did not treat its negro population well. "Afraid," said Mr. Speaker gently, "that is hardly relevant."

Whereupon Mr. GALLACHER subsided—and made it clear that, whatever he thought of the South African Government, he joined in the good wishes to the Royal party. The motion was carried *nemine contradicente*.

The business of the day was the Agriculture Bill, and Mr. TOM WILLIAMS, the Minister of Agriculture, urged that the Bill would do a great deal for that vast industry, on which the nation so greatly depended. Other Members did not share this rosy view, and argued that there were too many

controls, restrictions and so on entwined about its limbs to enable the industry to keep its head above water in the perilous times to come. The Government's case, however, was that the controls and restrictions were really an artfully-contrived lifebelt, designed to keep the industry afloat.

The argument went on for a long time, and late at night was adjourned until the morrow.

At Question-time, Mr. ERNEST BEVIN, the Foreign Secretary, had regretfully announced the breakdown of the efforts to get a revised Treaty with Egypt. The Egyptian Govern-

ment, prefaced a question to the nimble-witted and hard-hitting Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer HUGH DALTON with the words: "With trepidation, Sir—number 551!"

The big-hearted Chancellor was so touched that he let the questioner down lightly. He was less gentle with another Conservative questioner, who, having asked one of those complicated questions about dollars and pounds, was treated by the Minister to a little curtain lecture on elementary economics—or maybe philosophy.

Pointing a finger at the student on the other side, he began: "Supposing the honourable Member lends me a dollar . . ." He paused unruffled while the entire Opposition emitted a determined "No!" and then went on: ". . . and supposing I earn another. I spend both on something. I cannot say which dollar I spend on one thing and which on another."

Which seemed more reasonable than the revelation Mr. BELLENGER made shortly afterwards, that "in the terminology of the War Office, an officer is not a soldier."

Mr. CREECH JONES, the Colonial Secretary, continued the sad story of events in Palestine, where a judge had been abducted from his own court, a retired major from his flat, by Jewish terrorists. The Minister said very firmly that this sort of thing must cease and that, unless it did, the country would have to be placed under martial law, with all that that entailed.

Mr. ATTLEE followed with a much more cheering account of talks with representatives of Burma, which had resulted in

agreement about the future of that vast country. There is to be an election in April, and the resulting Assembly will work out a Constitution for a self-governing Burma. Meanwhile, Britain was to give Burma an interest-free loan. There were general cheers at this, but Mr. CHURCHILL rose and asked pithily: "Does this mean that we pay and go—or only that we go?"

Mr. ATTLEE, who can also be pithy when the occasion demands, retorted that Mr. CHURCHILL's logical faculty seemed to have deserted him. To which Mr. CHURCHILL replied that he wanted an opportunity to debate what he called "this dismal transaction."

Sir THOMAS DUGDALE, for years silenced by holding office as a Whip, showed the House what it had been



THE MAP OF TREASURE ISLAND

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MR. R. A. BUTLER.

"Agriculture is our one hidden treasure . . ."  
Mr. Butler on the Agriculture Bill.

ment had called off the talks, and months of negotiation had led to no results. So the existing treaty, made in 1936 and due to last for twenty years, stood.

**Tuesday, January 28th.**—Question-time has become such a fiesta for the verbal sharpshooter that Ministers are learning to be cautious in their most "stock" replies. Mr. FRED BELLENGER, the War Minister, for instance, had six words typed on the paper before him, but he delivered them thus: "This matter is—if I may say so—under active consideration." Your scribe offers no prizes for the detection of the words the Minister inserted.

This sort of thing is catching, and Sir WALDRON SMITHERS, who is a little apt to rush in where—other Members



losing all that time by intervening most effectively in the resumed debate on the Agriculture Bill. It was a thoughtful, well-delivered and constructive speech, in which Sir THOMAS agreed that efficiency must be agriculture's watchword, but contended that the Bill's methods were not those best calculated to bring about that highly desirable result. Sir FRANK SOSKICE, the over-worked Solicitor-General (who seems to find his way, always with the utmost charm and skill, into the most unlikely debates), replied that agriculture's slogan should be "*All out for years ahead!*"

The Opposition seemed disposed to give this slogan a pugilistic significance, but, after a little shouting and counter-shouting, the Bill was allowed to pass Second Reading without a division.

Their Lordships passed without dissent (there are no Communist Peers, as yet) a loyal Address to Their Majesties on their coming trip to South Africa.

*Wednesday, January 29th.*—Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL is looking quite forlorn without his sparring-partner, Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, who (to the regret of all Parties) is still on the sick-list. Mr. CHURCHILL has taken to walking into the House with his gaze focused hopefully on the place reserved for the Leader of the House, and, finding it empty, slumps in his own seat with disappointment written large on his face.

This afternoon he brightened for a time when he had a rough-and-tumble with Mr. JOHN STRACHEY, the Food Minister. The Minister was asked about inspectors who went around seeking illegal meals, walking into flats which were also used as jelly factories, and similar deeds of derring-do. He defended their action, whereat the light of battle appeared in Mr. CHURCHILL's eyes.

With just that expression he has usually reserved for the Thursday-afternoon battles with Mr. M., the Leader of the Opposition got after Mr. S., who looked on apprehensively.

Frigidly surveying the Minister, Mr. CHURCHILL demanded: "Do you deny that to employ at the public expense a considerable number of persons in order to try to provoke a breach of the regulations by His Majesty's subjects is a despicable procedure?"

The Minister thought about this for a moment, then replied: "If it is a despicable procedure, you were continuing it for several years when you were Prime Minister!"

"But," proceeded Mr. CHURCHILL, after an interval in which the House

demonstrated its disapproval of the Minister's brusque words, "what right has the Minister to apply war-time processes—when the country's life was at stake—after a year and a half of peace?"

"The need for enforcement is as great now as then," cried the Minister, and Mr. CHURCHILL snapped back: "How many more snoopers are being used now than during the war?"

"I should require notice of that," answered the Minister warily.

The proceedings, as they used to say about public meetings, then terminated.

Business of the day was the Town and Country Planning Bill, which enables the Government to put a tax of up to 100 per cent. on "betterment" values of land improved by public works in the neighbourhood—and, as the legal phrase goes, "purposes pertaining thereto."

Mr. LEWIS SILKIN, the Minister of Town and Country Planning, certainly knows his subject, and his pretty successful effort to explain it to the rest

of the House occupied some two hours and twelve minutes. He maintained that no landowner had a *right* to increased value for his land or to compensation if he lost it. But the Government, as a matter of grace, was prepared to make available a sum of £300,000,000 for that purpose. But not to meet rights, the Minister emphasized—purely to show how benevolent the Government was. He added modestly that he looked forward to the co-operation of the House in improving the Bill.

Mr. W. S. MORRISON, who was the first holder of Mr. SILKIN's office, complained about the complete vagueness of the Bill, and especially about the plans to share out the £300,000,000. Anyway, the sum was hopelessly inadequate and unfair.

In the course of the ensuing debate, Mr. MCGHEE, a Government supporter, announced that he was so disgusted about the £300,000,000 that he proposed to abstain from voting for the Bill. But it turned out that he wanted to delete the "3" from in front of the eight noughts—his assessment of the rights of landlords being nil.

So it went on and into

*Thursday, January 30th.* when, after a lot more argument, the Bill was given its Second Reading and sent to a committee for detailed examination.

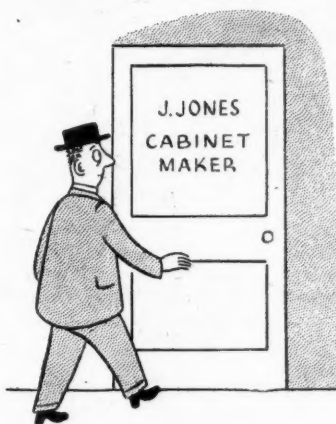
Mr. ARTHUR GREENWOOD, still deputising for Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, made everybody feel at home by having a row with Mr. CHURCHILL over next week's business.

He battled to such effect, indeed, that Mr. CHURCHILL was led to complain that, if he adopted that tone, he (Mr. CHURCHILL) would find himself wishing the absent Mr. MORRISON back at his post. He added, to general non-Party cheers, his regret that his normal opponent was laid aside by illness.

There was talk about "kindergarten lessons in Parliamentary procedure," "lamentable failure of the Minister of Health," but it all came to nothing in the end.

Mr. CHUTER EDE, the Home Secretary, had some news for schoolboys. Whether it was good or bad is a matter of taste—or feeling. It was this: "I am reluctant to adopt any of the intellectual tortures some people want substituted for caning."

He did not go into details—and nobody asked.



The Turning Worm is Mechanized.  
"A NOVEL FORM OF WORM STEERING GEAR."  
Headline in "Commercial Motor."



"... but mind you, we had a frightful job getting it through the Customs."

## Back at the Wheel

### III—Fetching It

**I** DON'T know what witchcraft Mr. Jutterby had exercised during the hours of darkness, but he was as good as his wife's word; when I turned up next morning, my overcoat-pocket stuffed with five-pound notes, the Good Goer was going, and going good. (Mrs. Jutterby, in her rôle of business manager, had confessed to an unfamiliarity with the cheque system. "I mean, it's not like having the money, like, is it?" I had to admit that it wasn't always.)

Any lingering wisp of indecision over the deal was dispelled as soon as I

heard the virile *chuff-chuff-bopple-TCHIK* and peered through the pale-blue haze to note that eager trembling, that characterful twitch on the last beat of each bar. "He paweth in the valley," I murmured exuberantly, "and rejoiceth in his strength."

"Pardon?" Mrs. Jutterby, who had been spying for me from behind her front curtains, tripped out on to the pavement with a little frown. I assured her that I was making no derogatory comment—rather the reverse, in fact.

"Oh, she'll reverse all right." Her brow cleared. "Else how do we get

out of the cool-de-sac?" We laughed together gaily. "Dad done it," she went on, with suitable gravity, "like I told you, soon as he'd had his tea."

"It's splendid, really splendid."

I meant it. It was thrill enough to be buying a car at all; to see it actually alive and kicking was wonderful, and I remembered feeling an exactly parallel exhilaration when I bought my last one. I recalled the eagerness with which I had pressed the man's price of seventeen pounds upon him the moment I saw that it was a car of orthodox size and shape, indistinguishable

(to me, at any rate) from cars I had seen travelling successfully on the highway, with seats and running-boards and full complement of doors and wheels . . . but when at a turn of the handle it crowned everything by bursting into life, a miracle of mechanical co-ordination—and all *mine*—I gave him an extra ten shillings and almost broke down. Then he almost broke down. And after I had driven the car a mile and a half—

"Well," broke in Mrs. Jutterby, but with a decent diffidence—"shall we—?"

"By all means," I said, coming to earth and patting my overcoat pocket.

"Step this way," she said, suddenly formal as she promoted herself from saleswoman to chief accountant, and led me briskly into the cabbage-scented hall.

ONE of the first things that struck me as remarkable on my short drive home was the capacity of the Good Goer's engine for producing blue smoke. It was a good sign, no doubt, and showed a certain margin of power, but considering the amount of blue smoke wreathing the outside of the car so richly that when retreating backwards from Mrs. Jutterby I looked up to wave her farewell, I could see nothing of the street but an azure cyclorama and (twisting round in the nick of time) nothing out of the back window but a very close and sneezing horse—considering all this smoke outside the car, it was surprising how much of it there was inside as well. Out-manceuvring the horse and its attendant milkman, who seemed to be shouting something, I brushed away a carbon-monoxide tear and made a mental note to look into this. Perhaps a nut wanted tightening somewhere. I was quite prepared for one or two minor adjustments of this kind.

I was also struck by the excellence of the springs, not only those in the driver's seat of which there was a tangible adequacy, but those responsible for the buoyancy of the whole car. So sensitively designed were these springs that the mildest irregularity of road-surface set them springing vivaciously for the next three hundred yards, and at these times the car moved forward with an unusual loping gait, not altogether disagreeable to one still cherishing a childish fondness for the roundabouts, but making it difficult to keep a firm grip on the wheel. I waited with some interest to see how the springs would respond to a major unevenness; it seemed possible that the car might become actually airborne, and while I was allowing my

thoughts to wander into a dreamy realm where cunningly-planned pot-holes annihilated delays at level-crossings I was shocked back into reality by several shuddering thwacks at the base of the spine. My off-side wheels, I saw, had run the gauntlet of a row of cat's-eye road-studs, and I gave the steering-wheel a generous anti-clockwise spin which, transmitted at leisure to the front axle, shortly drew me over slightly to the left. (Bartrop in the course of his examination had commented, I remembered, that there was a lot of play in the steering, but I had retorted that I liked it. I do. You get a better flourish into your driving.)

I was nearly home when I saw through the blue haze the very newsagent's shop outside which Mr. Jutterby had advertised his Good Goer. This gave me an opportunity I had been looking for. Driving blithely along in a car is all very well, but where is the fun, once you've worked your way through into top gear? There's nothing in it. Starting and stopping provides me with my real excitement in motoring. I would stop at the newsagent's, tell him that he could now save valuable space in his advertisement frame, and then start again. Besides, it would give me practice with the gears; this I needed, as I plainly couldn't go on reading the position numbers off the casing by the light of my cigarette-lighter. That was

how accidents happened, and I did not want an accident, particularly in an uninsured car with an expired licence.

The newsagent did not seem especially overawed to have a motorist come into his shop. He did not laugh, on the other hand, merely greeting me with a civil "No cigarettes."

"I thought I'd let you know," I said, slapping the counter with my (motoring) gloves in a hearty manner, "that I've bought the car."

"The car?"

"Mr. Jutterby's car. The Good Goer, you know."

This appeared to strike a chord, and he looked at me with a new respect. A new something, at any rate.

"Oh," he said. "Mr. Jutterby's car." He gave me the look again, nodded twice and added "That."

"So you can take the postcard down."

"I see." The newsagent hesitated. "Do you know Mr. Jutterby?"

"Oh, rather!" I said, as if we had been bosom friends from kindergarten days.

"Does it go?"

"Perhaps you'd like to see me drive off," I said grandly. "I've got her outside."

He lifted the counter-flap and followed me with interest to the door, where we both stopped.

"I thought you said—" he began.

"It was here a minute ago." I stared at the empty bit of road. "Look, there's some of the blue smoke, still."

"What's that down there—is that it?"

It was of course. I'd have known that noble shape anywhere. As I walked quickly down the almost negligible incline I congratulated myself on owning such an easy-running car. The man shouted after me that Mr. Jutterby had always had trouble with the hand-brake, but it was only when I was at a safe distance that he came out in his true colours and added in a malicious bawl, "Amongst other things!"

I ignored this. I could easily tighten a nut in a hand-brake. I also refused to be depressed either by the inscription "Crocks 2 a 1d." which I found printed in the bonnet dust when I got home, or a postcard awaiting me from Bartrop saying peremptorily: "On no account buy that car." I was a motorist again, and I was fiercely glad. Looking down from my top-floor flat I saw with satisfaction that my car had quite modern lines from above; also that it had only moved a foot or two towards the other end of the block.

(To be overhauled) J. B. B.



"You'll like this—Schubert's Unfinished."



## The Cosmic Mess

**T**WENTY thousand deserters—most of them believed to be in the London district—many armed.” Alarming. But surely most of them must sleep somewhere—even if they spend most of the nights burgling or smash-and-grabbing. And surely many of the householders in whose homes they sleep (by day) must have “reason to believe” that their lodgers are deserters. People who have no ration-cards, no coupons, and all that. And the penalties for “harbouring” deserters are pretty severe—what is it, six months’ hard labour? If this was noised about a bit—frequently mentioned on the air, for example—it might help. The deserter, one gathers, does his eating at restaurants, canteens, and civic restaurants, where he need not produce a ration-card: but the lodging-letter, liable to heavy punishment for “harbouring,” is surely entitled to ask the candidate for lodgings if he does possess a ration-card, discharge-papers, and so forth: and, if the landlady does not inquire in present circumstances, will she have a very good defence?

Mercy, charity, and hospitality are crimes now, are they?—she may well complain. Alas, so many of the old virtues are going the same way. It used to be a good thing to be “house-proud”—to mend that fence, to paint the front-door, to keep the damp out, to attack dry-rot the moment it appeared, and generally to make the house a credit to the street and an asset to the landlord. Now all these things are increasingly wicked. It is more dangerous to use a can of paint than it is to go about with a revolver. Cleanliness is next to selfishness; and a man makes his house look nice at his peril—even, it seems, if he slaps the paint on himself. Read this indignant complaint: “While London hospitals and schools are badly in need of paint many public houses and hotels are being painted.” How shocking! It is not explained why a school should look gay but a public house or hotel be dirty. No doubt the writer knows best, and all this is right and necessary. But what are we coming to? The next thing, we shall be boasting about our patriotic dry-rot, showing off our broken fences and window frames, glorying in flaky paint, damp corners and leaky taps, and throwing stones at the brute across the road who has painted his little gate. One day, perhaps, it will be anti-social to wash

and shave. Why not? Thrift is a vice now: you become a “rentier”. Truth is “provocative”. And Faith, Hope and Charity, one fears, are hopelessly undynamic and bourgeois.

\* \* \* \* \*

### FOOD FLASH-BACK

#### “OFFALS”

“Offal”—“a thing thrown off”—then thrown away:

“Term of contempt”, the dictionaries say.

But some of us would reverently bow If we could meet a little offal now.

Kidneys! I think we think of kidneys most,

Those tender morsels in a nest of toast, Or, now and then, on days of joy and pride,

With bacon rashers juicily allied.

Liver—so nourishing and good for you! Sweetbreads—so soft one did not have to chew!

Pigs’ feet, emerging from the filthy sties,

Were delicacies peers did not despise. Do you remember how the ox-tongue sat Upon the sideboard? What’s become of that?

Where are they gone, the loved entrails of yore?

Do sheep and cattle have insides no more?

Has some new breed from our fair pastures sprung

*Sans* head, tail, liver, kidney, sweet-bread, tongue?

From your great joints I easily refrain: But let me see the offals on again.

\* \* \* \* \*

This column heartily agrees with Sir Herbert Morgan (writing to the *Daily Telegraph*) that certain figures in the Appendix to the White Paper (Cmd. 7018) ought to be “broken down”. These are the figures:

Appendix Nov. 1946	
1. Total working population . . . . .	20,324,000
2. H.M. Forces and Auxiliary Services . . .	1,510,000
3. Manufacture of equipment and supplies for Forces . . .	474,000
4. National Govt. Services, Local Govt. Service, National Fire Service & Police, Professional and Personal Services, Entertainment and Sport . . .	3,001,000
Balance of Working Population available .	15,339,000

4,985,000 chaps in sections 2, 3 and 4, you see—an increase of 815,000 since mid-1939, so that there are now, it seems,

241,000 fewer workers available for under-manned industries, export, etc., and all the other “work to be done”.

Let us do a little “breaking-down” ourselves. There are four sub-categories in the “unproductive” category 4 (for that, clearly, is what lawyers call the “innuendo”):

(i) *National Govt. Services—Local Govt. Service*. This column refuses resolutely to say an unkind word about Civil Servants—national or local. If, not content with having a world war, you insist on nationalizing everything in sight, you are bound to have a good many. This column would merely like to know, in its idle curiosity, how many there are.

(ii) *National Fire Service and Police*. This column begrudges nothing to these fine services; and would like to see more policemen than it does.

(iii) *Professional and Personal Services*. Now here’s a kettle of fish—rather important fish! Doctors, surgeons, dentists, specialists, research-workers, barristers, solicitors, judges, Members of Parliament, authors, playwrights, journalists, editors, engineers, architects, composers, painters, musicians, inventors, designers, philosophers, scholars, historians, teachers, professors, clergymen, nurses—and who knows who?

And the last sub-category is:

(iv) *Entertainment and Sport*. “Entertainment and sport.” The concatenation should surprise no one in a State which now levies the same tax on a ticket for a play or opera as it does on a ticket for a football-match (that is, if anyone is rashly seeking to make a profit). But what is meant by “entertainment”? Those, no doubt, who help to produce or present plays, films, music and song. But does it include those who make books or newspapers? If not, why not—for it is difficult to see why books and newspapers (though, very properly, they incur no entertainment tax) are not, in this appendix, as much “entertainments” as plays or films.

On the other hand—if they are included—why? For see what “Entertainment” is coupled with—“Sport”. And those engaged in “Sport” include not only the admirable Hammond and Woodcock, the centre-forward, the half-back, the bowler, the huntsman, the starter, the referee, the trainer, the jockey and the stable-boy, and the man who pulls the heavy roller; but—presumably—the admirable book-maker and his tout, the servants of



*"It's no use asking me what Lloyd George said in nineteen-twenty—I can't even remember what Mrs. Baker said only yesterday about next Friday's whist-drive."*

the totalisator and the "commission agent", and the numerous henchmen of the football pools. (And, talking of "breaking down", this column would like to know how many of the 3,001,000 are contributed by the last-named characters.)

Well now, let us get all things in perspective. This White Paper, and this Appendix, are concerned with "output", and "export", and the "manning up" of "vital industries". And, though no harsh words are spoken, there is audible a note of sadness. Too many chaps are engaged in sub-categories (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv), and so unable to produce coal, steel, or cotton goods. Sub-categories (i) and (ii) can look after themselves—and, anyhow, are not likely to be much molested by H.M. Govt. But, on behalf of sub-category (iii) and parts of sub-category (iv) this column feels bound to say a few firm and even violent words.

First, it says loudly and harshly, the characters in sub-category (iii) include the only genuine creators in the

country; and therefore, in an economic "inquest" (apt word) they should not be classed with bookmakers' touts, or even with the admirable centre-forward or long-stop. Further, they represent, perhaps, the only really "vital industries". They began (most of them) long before coal, steel and cotton were heard of; and, if coal, steel and cotton came to an end, they would still continue—in caves or tree-tops, if necessary. So they should not be unfavourably compared with young men and women who "produce" lipstick or soda-water.

Secondly, passing to sub-category (iv) this column remarks that books, plays, films, songs, music, and some newspapers are exportable and can and do earn dollars. Those concerned in producing them, therefore, should not, in an "economic inquest", be coupled with professional goal-keepers, greyhound attendants, football-pool staffs or street bookmakers.

This column hopes that this and other insults will be corrected in the next Black Paper.

A. P. H.

### *Upon Julia, Playing the Oboe*

**W**HENAS I hear my Julia play  
Upon the oboe, oft I say  
Well pleased were I if I might  
sit

Hour-long by her and hark to it,  
So sweet the strains, so true the note  
She charmeth from its well-tuned  
throat.

But, oh! when I do see her face,  
How grievously doth she grimace,  
How both her cheeks do swell and puff,  
Like Boreas when his breath is rough!  
Her cherry lips, how they are pursed,  
The while she blows as she would burst;  
Her eyes, too, from her head are seen  
To start as she had strangled been,  
And all her face doth take a shape  
Most like a gargoyle or an ape.

Thus, while she plays, am I resigned  
To be awhile, like Cupid, blind.

C. F. S.

## At the Play

### "BORN YESTERDAY" (GARRICK)

NEW YORK thought this farce by Mr. GARSON KANIN the best it had struck for years, the laughs of the first-night audience here must have been heard as far as Wapping, and my critical comrades have almost unanimously praised it; since it also represents a venture in management by Mr. LAURENCE OLIVIER I am the sorrier to sound a slightly dissonant note. The play is about the private affairs of a human gorilla, private affairs which boil down mainly to the unnatural intellectual blossoming of a red-headed moll under his protection; and the fact is that, entertaining as the antics of such livestock may be, two and a half hours in front of any gorilla's cage is a long time. I can believe almost anything of an American scrap-iron magnate, for the combination of words has a merchant-adventurer ring which stirs the blood. I can believe, for instance, that words of two syllables would glance off his skull like duck-shot off an elephant, that, greedy for the battle-junk of Europe, he would corrupt senators and hire ex-assistant attorney-generals to drive loop-holes in the law, and that, convinced of the importance of making a good impression on Washington society, he might engage some kind of governess to induce a suitable flow of small-talk in his dumb girl-friend; but what I absolutely decline to believe is that so primordial a child of nature would engage an attractive young man for the task, and, having done so, leave him to get on with the spelling lessons at all hours of the day and night. This is an insurmountable difficulty, for the tutor must be galvanic enough, for the purposes of the story, to melt the lady's heart as well as her frozen ego. Mr. WILLIAM KEMP is qualified to do this, but the suggestion that a pair of heavy spectacles is sufficient to neutralize a gangster's jealousy just doesn't wash. That is one serious weakness. Another is that the girl *Billie*, who is very

funny in the early stages of her education, gets steadily less so as her soul awakens. She takes to Tom Paine and the higher learning as avidly as any Runyon character to gin and lead, but instead of becoming a human being she steps out of her chrysalis in the unlikely rôle of the voice of the submerged tenth, and ends up by addressing the horrified gorilla exactly as if he were the Committee on Foreign Affairs. I think this failure to warm up into recognizable humanity may be less the fault of the author than of Miss YOLANDE DONLAN, who

it at very nearly Broadway pace, and in the leading part Mr. HARTLEY POWER gives a stupendously anthropoid performance. He roars and beats his torso and rumbles about the stage on the outside edges of his feet in a manner which would have made Darwin hug himself, and to watch his face while a new idea burgeons very gradually behind it is a memorable experience. Mr. ROGER FURSE has caricatured so skilfully a hotel suite at 235 dollars a day that it makes one reel. And no notice would be complete without a word of the warmest praise for the magnate's poor relation, who ministers to his every want with a Beppo-like singleness of mind. This is Mr. MICHAEL BALFOUR.

### "THE LAKE OF THE SWANS" (BOLTONS, DRAYTON GARDENS)

A timely addition to London's intelligent small theatres, this is a welcome convert from the cinema and it leads off with a pleasantly acted play about Tchaikovsky, by Miss JANET LEATHAM and Mr. VLADIMIR CZERNIKOFF. The first act begins a little stickily but it quickly gains strength for a convincing account of the composer's embarrassing marriage to an emotional and difficult young woman, of his relations with his unseen patroness and of his friendship with *Rimsky-Korsakoff*, the ex-N.O. who brought the gallantry and charm of his service to melt the unhealthy awe with which poor *Tchaikovsky* seems to have been surrounded by everyone

except his silly wife. Part of the play's interest lies admittedly in its biographical glimpse into the lives of two great musicians, and in places its sentiments grow a trifle highfalutin; but its authors can draw character. Mr. PETER MADREN's *Tchaikovsky* is a firm portrait of gentle, harassed genius, Miss GWYNNE WHITBY plays *Nadejka*, the altruistic widow who supports him from afar, with quiet distinction, Miss ANNA KORDA as *Antonina*, his wife, whips herself into a regular maelstrom of passion, and as *Rimsky-Korsakoff* Mr. ANTHONY MARLOWE gives a delightfully witty and ironic performance. The production is by Mr. JOHN WYSE and to his credit. ERIC.



THE BIG SHOT MISSES FIRE.

Harry Brock . . . . . Mr. HARTLEY POWER  
Billie Dawn . . . . . Miss YOLANDE DONLAN  
Paul Verrall . . . . . Mr. WILLIAM KEMP

is otherwise a highly efficient vehicle for pert cracks such as from time to time escape a moll. A further flaw, perhaps not so grave, is that two of the additional inmates of this gilded zoo are pretty poor company, for the bribed senator is sadly in the grips of conscience and the boozy lawyer is much embittered at his talents being thrown away on the biggest junk-heap in the world.

But if in my view the piece is by no means as good as has been suggested, and if it is not so much witty as merely rich in a certain boldness of expression—a very different thing—it has at any rate some exceedingly funny moments. Mr. OLIVIER has produced



## Among My Vegetables

THE land surrounding our cottage must be very old, and during the first three months of our occupation the greater part of it has been under water. It was therefore something of a surprise to me to receive a form in duplicate and two colours, marked URGENT and asking for a whole mine of information that seemed to indicate some kind of research work for a new agricultural encyclopædia.

After spending half an hour in a detailed analysis of the form, passing over such items as Silage; Unused Stocks of Binder Twine on Holding; Shearling Ewes (or Gimmers); Milch Goats; All Other Goats; Ram Lambs; and Ducks, Geese and Turkeys of All Ages, I found that one small problem still remained.

This consisted of a quantity of green stuff that had been growing in some abundance outside the larder window. It was obviously edible, but a search in the only two gardening books I could lay my hands on failed to reveal its true identity. According to the Green Form it might have been one of

the following: Broccoli (Heading); Autumn Cabbage (not yet marketed); Winter Cabbage; Kale and Sprouting Broccoli; Autumn Savoys (not yet marketed); or Winter Savoys. Hermione insisted that they were brussels-sprouts that hadn't come to anything, but for some mysterious reason the Green Form would have nothing to do with brussels-sprouts by that name.

I had a glimmer of hope for a moment when I saw on the Green Form the words *Please see notes on Buff Form*. I followed this up and became quite excited to find on the Buff Form *Please see notes overleaf*. But there my enthusiasm ended. The only enlightenment offered me was:—

(e) In making your return of cabbage crops, please observe the following definitions:—

*Autumn Cabbage* (not yet marketed). Nonpareil, Winnigstadt, Utility and other varieties of a similar period of maturity.

*Winter Cabbage*. Christmas Drumhead, January King, Late Drumhead

and other varieties of a similar period of maturity.

*Autumn Savoys* (not yet marketed). Best of All, Ormskirk Early, Ormskirk Medium, Green Curled and similar varieties.

*Winter Savoys*. Ormskirk Late, Ormskirk Extra Late, Latest of All, Omega, Alexander's Late and similar varieties.

In the end I took what seemed to me to be the only way out, pulling up all our green stuff and putting *nil* after all the Cabbage Family (growing).

But, as Hermione points out, we shall have to eat it as quickly as possible before the next two forms arrive. If it has to be buried it will become Silage, and this will necessitate two most difficult entries under items 25 and 26.

"MANCHESTER MISSES THE FOG"

Heading in Manchester paper.

Well, Manchester must put up with shortages like the rest of us.



"Oh yes, he KNOWS—but he still says he wants exercise."



"We regret that, owing to transport difficulties, Snowy and Jock arrived just too late to extricate Dick Barton from his predicament with the man-eating tarantulas."

### Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

#### Victoria in Paris

ON Sunday the eighteenth of August, 1855, Victoria, Albert, Vicky and Bertie disembarked with great pomp at Boulogne to repay the first visit of Louis Napoleon and Eugénie to Windsor. Their sojourn, in intimate detail and with a vivid sense of its personal, social and historical importance, is the admirably chosen and treated theme of *A Distant Summer* (SAMPSON, LOW, 15/-). On the face of it, nothing is easier to reconstruct than this gala week. The press was full of it and *The Illustrated London News* provides delightful wood-engravings of the greatest crowds that ever filled Paris and the chandelier-lit palaces in which the two couples got to know and appreciate each other. Appreciate each other they did; and if there is a flaw in EDITH SAUNDERS' handling of the quartet, it lies in her denigration of the Empress, who had the sense to efface herself and leave her husband to Victoria. The whole garish drama, as played with Crimean death-rattles "off," was to have momentous effects, as Bismarck, who was present, surmised. But even Bismarck did not overhear the most significant of the royal comments, which was that of a good European of thirteen. "You have a nice country," said Bertie to the Emperor. "I would like to be your son."

H. P. E.

#### English Characters

English literature abounds in character studies, and in *Portraits in Prose* (ROUTLEDGE, 10/6) Mr. HUGH MACDONALD has made an admirable selection of one hundred and thirty-eight descriptions of English men and women by their contemporaries. It is interesting to notice that already in the second portrait in the book, of the Abbot Samson who died in 1211, the English delight in personal idiosyncrasies appears, the chronicler commenting on the Abbot's willingness to eat whatever was put before him, his disapproval of persons who were universally amiable, and his

habit of not showing his affection where he felt it most. Some of the portraits, however, are conventional and generalized. One does not see Queen Elizabeth any more clearly after being told that she was religious and magnanimous, merciful and just, lovely and loving; Lady Giffard's lament that nothing is harder than to write anybody's character explains itself to those who follow her through her conscientious but unilluminated sketch of Sir William Temple; and Matthew Arnold does not exactly come to life in Mrs. Humphry Ward's—"But how soon the nascent dread lest their poet should be somehow separated from them by the 'great world' passes away from mother and sisters—for ever!" Mr. MACDONALD has, however, made excellent selections from Lord Halifax, Lord Chesterfield and Horace Walpole, from Hazlitt, Carlyle and De Quincey; and, among the more recent portraits which he has included, Mr. A. S. F. Gow's A. E. Housman and Mr. Desmond MacCarthy's brilliant impressions of Meredith and Samuel Butler are especially memorable.

H. K.

#### A Novelist on the Land

After fifteen years of living and writing in France—during which he earned a diploma as "a working-man gardener" and a medal from the Ministry of Agriculture for introducing American vegetables—Mr. LOUIS BROMFIELD returned to his native Ohio and began farming. His grandfather had farmed in *Pleasant Valley* (CASSELL, 10/6); and though eighty per cent. of American farms have, he says, gone down since they were first cleared, his household, and six other households on half a dozen adjacent farms, set out to show what could still be wrested from American soil when families were farming primarily for themselves and not for commerce. They also showed how fertility of every kind could be built up during the process. This admirable and successful experiment is delightfully related; and the author's adaptation to specifically American conditions of the traditional French policy of ultimate dependence on your own piece of land—whatever your job—makes it a model for any farmer or gardener who would like to see the old world brought in to redress the balance of the new. This is a feat Mr. BROMFIELD feels we should all accomplish: if only because good food comes first; there is no democracy without ownership; and "a proletariat can vote any democracy out of existence."

H. P. E.

#### Cavalier and Roundhead

Mr. H. R. WILLIAMSON, though admitting that there is much to be said for the well-groomed chronology that proceeds in orderly stages by way of dates with occurrences attached, himself prefers a record built on a study of individual human reactions. He sees English history of the first half of the seventeenth century, for instance, as a chapter of events developed in the contacts and frictions of two personalities, and though it is true that formidable outsiders do pretty often claim the stage, while matters of abstract principle cannot be whittled down to complete insignificance, yet he does succeed in building up a narrative—*Charles and Cromwell* (DUCKWORTH, 15/-)—in which his two chief actors at least go far to shape a country's destiny. Both here are portrayed with finely balanced sympathy and mercilessness—Cromwell, who wrestled in prayer and wrought in battles; Charles, who wrote sweet piety and called in foreigners to his aid; Cromwell, who single-handed charged a regiment of mutineers; Charles, who, escaping, got stuck in a window; Cromwell battered and tormented in his search for a logical basis of government, whose

attempts at compromise endlessly broke down on a duplicity that to Charles was no more than legitimate *finesse* in dealing with rebels; Cromwell driven at last into crude personal dictatorship; Charles royally sure of some things always and willing to die for his royalty. There is much to admire and more to call human here in both these men, and if the writer's own inclination is towards the rougher, larger mould, even the most ardent Jacobite may still read this study without offence, or indeed without any fears for his loyalty.

C. C. F.

### Our Towns

*"More discontents I never had  
Since I was born, than here,  
Where I have been, and still am, sad  
In this dull Devonshire."*

So sang Herrick, and so, in general, though he saw the town squarely through no rose spectacles, echoed the late THOMAS BURKE, who shortly before his death finished *The English Townsman* (BATSFORD, 12/6). He wrote with a sub-acid discrimination that was merciless to humbugs, windbags and vandals, and it is the sadder that no more will come from so informed and entertaining a pen. In the lore of towns he was soaked. This account of their growth and of the changing manners of their citizens is reinforced, within the limits of a slim book, with much of his own spirited observation; no one could have had a heartier dislike of the official molluscs who so obstructively encrust our body politic. The country, he claimed, has always been backed by the moralists, who have conveniently overlooked statistics showing it to be easily ahead of the town in the nastier sorts of crime, and also by the bulk of the poets, many of whose happiest rural passages have been conceived in urban comfort. Although he mourned the decline of the individual, drowned in mass-movements, his clothes churned out by multiple tailors and his accents watered by the B.B.C., he welcomed his advance as a good neighbour. Mr. BURKE was not always strictly fair, as when he claimed that the modern manufacturer comes to work at eleven, and, in an attack on the system of apprenticeship, that almost any craft could be learned by a smart youth in a year, but in the main the book is balanced. It is nobly illustrated with prints and also with reproductions of contemporary paintings.

E. O. D. K.

### Bomber Harris

*Bomber Offensive* (COLLINS, 21/-), by Marshal of the R.A.F., Sir ARTHUR HARRIS, G.C.B., O.B.E., A.F.C., is an interesting, heart-breaking, heart-lifting and bitterly unpalatable book. It is heart-lifting as a history of what Bomber Command achieved during the recent war and heart-breaking because of the rider—"Not for nothing was it said in the fighting Services that had they only the King's Enemies to deal with—how easy that would be." For the book is one sustained snarl against bureaucracy, and much that is told in it rings too true for comfort. It is impossible to believe that any man would write such a book unless compelled by cold rage and the certainty that more could have been done in less time and at less loss of life if commanders in the field and not "pseudo-technicians" and Civil Servants had had the say-so. In places the author is extremely ungenerous, sometimes childishly so. Does it matter whether or no "the sailors had the effrontery to nominate themselves the 'Senior Service' after the Napoleonic wars"? Is it quite a fact to say "in fact, aircraft did most of the Fleet's work"? He expresses

the greatest loyalty to Mr. Churchill, General Smuts and many of the American commanders, believes that the "whole key to our defence is encouragement of science and the scientists," that there should be one fighting Service and not three, and that the only alternative to destruction is world federation. Probably most readers will agree and disagree with much that is said, but they will all be made to think pretty rapidly. That, no doubt, is the purpose of the book.

B. E. B.

### The War in Tuscany

*War in Val d'Orcia* (JONATHAN CAPE, 10/6) is a diary kept by the Marchesa ORIGO, an Englishwoman by birth, who spent the war on an estate in Southern Tuscany. Most war diaries have to appear in their original form for want of the necessary skill to turn them into narratives; but the Marchesa ORIGO writes so well that one cannot help regretting the connected narrative she could have shaped out of her diary. Her story opens on January 30th 1943 with the arrival of refugee children bombed out of Genoa. As an Englishwoman married to an Italian her sympathies were even more divided than those of the Italians themselves. Much as the Italians hated the Germans, and sick though most of them by this time were of Mussolini, they did not take as kindly to being bombed from the air and shelled by our advancing armies as some sections of Allied opinion chose to expect. Furthermore, as the Allied armies advanced very slowly and the Germans fought savagely and imposed martial law throughout the territories still in their grip, the last few months, before, towards the close of June 1944, the Germans were cleared out of Tuscany, were the period of the most trying and often tragic episodes recorded in the writer's diary. The book closes on the return of the peasants to take up their daily toil; and its most moving pages record the help they, on all occasions, freely gave to the thousands of escaped prisoners wandering through Italy.

H. K.





## Annual Letter to My Dog

**M**Y DEAR HOUND,—For many years it was my custom with your predecessor in office to issue a statement once a year on lines not dissimilar from the kind of thing in which chairmen of salmon-curing cartels and secretaries of Bands of Hope inform their supporters how well the salmon and the hope are holding out. There was a touch of the King's Speech at the opening of Parliament about it too. I used to put my finger in a kindly manner on any unfortunate trends of behaviour which had come above ground during the past twelve months, and I sketched lightly the dotted lines along which improvement might be found. I think these letters of mine had some slight influence for the better. He was a totally different dog from you, and I am sure that if you could have met him it would not have been much of a success. Where you are a child of nature, green in thought and deed and a rustic to the tip of your tail, he was urbanity personified. Where you are impelled by a chaotic jumble of primordial impulses, his life was regulated by the utmost sophistication. Intellectually he may have been a little wanting, but his intelligence was rich in the low cunning of the town-dweller. Whereas you, my dear hound, as everyone knows, are a fool.

Lord Chesterfield, who worked a parallel pitch to mine some time ago, though I think he was scarcely so nice a man, counted it vulgar to run. For quite other reasons I dislike the practice. It drives the oxygen from the

body and leaves a false impression of the passing countryside. On my fortieth birthday my only gift to myself was a promise that in no circumstances would I again run for a bus, and I cannot tell you how much this concession has brightened and sweetened my life. I want you to understand that your efforts to make me run are therefore utterly wasted. Short of fats, unsettled by clashing ideologies and swollen with potatoes as we are, this is a time when every ounce of energy must be conserved. I will fling balls, sticks and bones within the ordinary limits of patience, but please understand once and for all, I will not run.

**Diet.** When you turn up your nose at your ample platter you display an abysmal ignorance of world economic conditions. I doubt, for instance, if any dog anywhere in the Balkans is offered such exquisite bits of old race-horse dyed quite such a lovely green. It is no good telling me that if you had been a Tudor dog you would have started the day with a haunch of venison and a young pig or two. Were I a Tudor I should knock off a couple of swan for my breakfast, and float them to their last rest on a great tide of Canary sack; and very delightful it would be. I agree the whole thing is the greatest pity, but to go on harping on it is only to augment our debilitation.

**Addiction to Beer.** Some philosophers have held that the beer-drinker is *dipso facto* a good man; and in principle I concur. But you must

surely understand that once it got about that I was giving beer to my dog I should immediately be black-listed by the brewers. A quiet birthday tankard, by all means, after the photographers have withdrawn, but for the rest of the year there must be a blue ribbon on your collar.

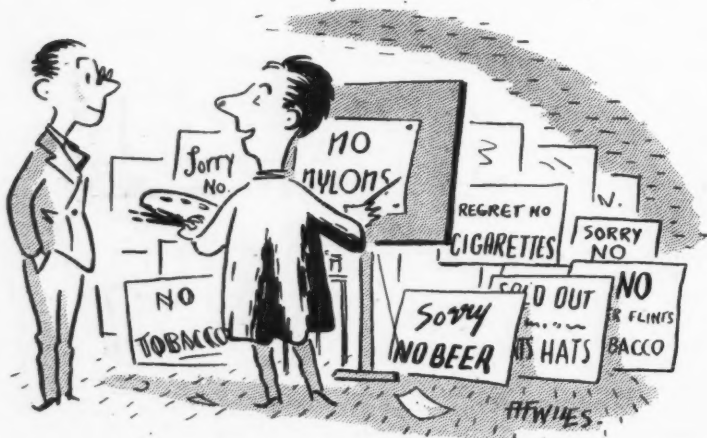
**The B.B.C.** This hypercritical attitude on the part of a country quadruped to the fare provided by a body of hardworking men and women striving night and day to give us what is most fruitful is an outrageous affectation which you would do well to drop. Your reiterated demands for a fourth programme are quite impracticable. As for the inclusion of a dog in the Brains Trust, I do not believe it would make the slightest difference either way.

**Morbid Interest in Rolling-Stock.** The only reason, I am convinced, that you sit day after day watching the trains crawl by is a vain hope that I will write a letter to *The Times* beginning "Sir, I wonder if any other of your constant readers possesses a Border terrier which . . ." and so on. I shall do no such thing. Except on matters of cosmic interest I never intrude myself on *The Times*.

**Indiscriminate Sodality.** I am less of a snob than poor Chesterfield, but I do face the fact that we all of us have a few comrades whom we are very glad to meet at a certain minimum distance from home. In this category your white, spotted, flop-eared chum is an exact fit. I never saw an animal with so much original sin reflected in the rake of a tail. I cannot of course prevent you from harrying moles with him on the other side of the county, but you would oblige me by abandoning all attempts to introduce him into what remains of the sanctity of my private life.

There are many other matters to which I could well refer, such as the phenomenon succinctly summed up by the poet Watson (Sir William, b. 1858) as the insinuating nose; but you are young yet, and I think it would be fairer to postpone them till next year. On the general question of obedience you will doubtless have remarked I have given up beating you. One might as well beat a stuffed owl. All I ask, and it is not much, is that since I am, after all, the bone-winner, you should occasionally make some small public contribution to the age-old fiction that the word of the master is law.

ERIC.



"Quite frankly, I shall be sorry when things are plentiful again."

*We hardly expected to find that those warm articles of clothing acquired during the war—*



*would—*



*eventually—*



*become—*



*so—*



*much—*



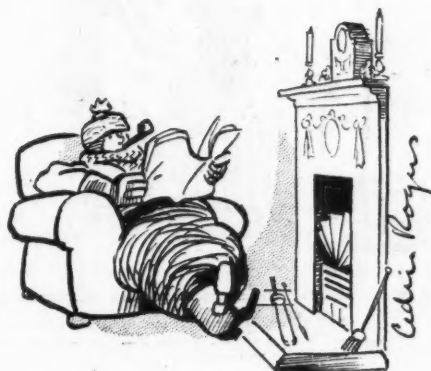
*more—*



*indispensable—*



*in—*



*peace!*

*Cecil Rogers*

## The Lingo

SO, you're going to Japan and you want to know something about the language. Well, if it's anything like what it was in occupied China you'll find the whole thing's a farce. Mind you, I don't mean that you can pick it up just by hearing it all round you. It's nothing like that. It sounds rather like a baby machine-gun going off with an inquiring hiccough introduced every now and then. Reading is a comparatively easy matter. There are two symbols for each of the vowels, but of the consonants only *n* can be written by itself; all the others have a vowel tacked on automatically; sometimes you sound it and sometimes you don't. There is no *l*: no matter—use *r*. The *i* of ice is written *ai*, and the *a* of day is written *ei*.

When you've mastered these and have learnt when to swallow a whole syllable and when to hiccough, you are well on the way to reading correctly. You needn't bother about the characters that occur; the sound symbols are kindly written at the sides.

THIS doesn't of course mean that you understand what you read. Far from it. The best way to acquire a speaking vocabulary is to read the notices at the street corners or on the shop-fronts. Before long you realize that it's a complete give-away. A post with a wooden disk on top announces *basu*. Remembering the proximity of

the U.S.A. and the tendency that *su* has to be swallowed, you have no difficulty in recognizing a bus-stop. Cheered by this first venture into a foreign, oriental language, you wait on the *peibumento* for the next *basu* that comes along, hold up your *sutekki* to catch the driver's eye and get in.

Arrived at the shops, you confidently set out to buy *pen*, *inki*, and *reta peipa*, also *kabon peipa* for your *taipuraita*. The successful purchase, farther along, of a *shatsu*, *redimeido*, and of a *nekutai* tempts you to buy *hankechi* as well.

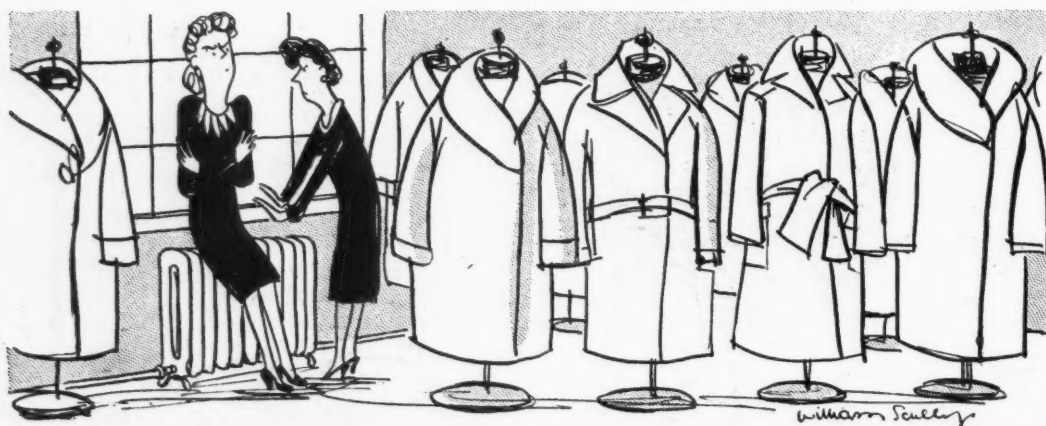
By then it's getting on for *ranchi* time. (Don't forget that *r=l*.) For this you may enter an *hoteru* or a *resutoranto*, choose a small *teberu* and call the *weitoresu*. If it is *Kurisamusu* time you can get your *purami pudingu* all right and *mintsu pai* too if you like. You will need an interpreter if you want turkey, but not if you are content with *poku chappu* or *soseji* and *poteto*. At other less festive seasons you may safely order *bisuteiko* and *biro* followed by *appuru pai* with *kondensu miriku*. If, however, you decide to eat lightly and have only one *doru* in your *handobakku*, you may ask for the humble *hamu undo eigo* with *bisuketto*, *chizu* and *retasu*.

Should you then wish to go and watch a *geimu* you can always reckon on seeing *beisu-boru*. Each player (and the *ampaiya*) is dressed like an American, *sueita* and *sukafu* complete.

To express approval you shout "Yo! Yo!" but if you are amused be careful not to say "Ha! Ha!" for that is the way one addresses one's mother. There is no difficulty about smoking, for *shigaretto* and *matchi* are easily obtained should you have no *paipu* and *tabaco* in the *poketto* of your *reinkoto*.

AT tea-time you are pulled up short in your triumphant career, for you need an interpreter for "tea" (but then, remember the proximity of the U.S.A.). But if you wish you may have instead *kohi*, *kokoa*, *remoneido* or *orenji-jusa*, or even, if the weather warrant it, an *aisukurima soda*. You can take your choice of *bata*, *jamu* or *jeri* to spread on your *tosuto* with the *naifu* provided.

If by now you have rather a headache, *orai*, take a couple of *asupirin* and go for a walk. You can have a *kokuteiro* before dinner and go to a *dansu horo* or a *kyabarei* after. Here you will see many a *modan boi* and *modan garu*, some looking distinctly *hai kara* (as Japanese *suranga* puts it). They can all speak some *Igirisu*, with a Japanese *akusento* of course, but in the end I expect you'll get along quite well just by demanding what you want very clearly and rather loudly in English with some sort of foreign accent attached, and that will be a *hinto* to the Japs that for them a *betto* time has at last arrived.



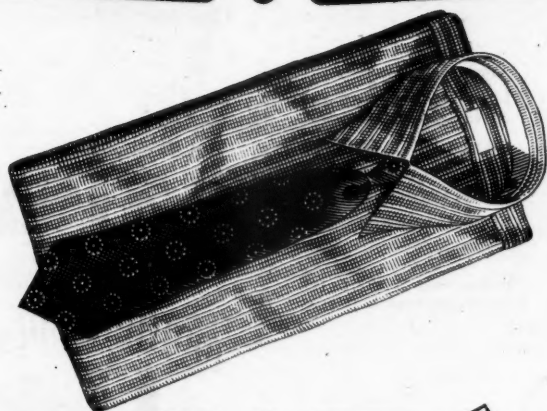
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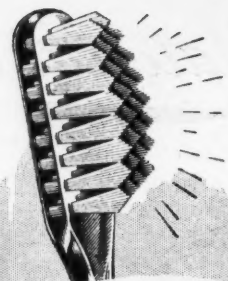
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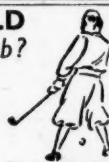
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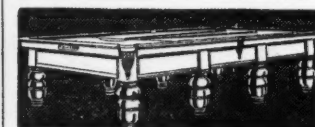
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